Garrick

Garrick

PROLOGUES

AND

EPILOGUES,

CELEBRATED FOR THEIR

POETICAL MERIT.

SPEAK THE SPEECH, I PR'YTHEE, AS I PRONOUNCE IT.——

SHAKSPEARE.

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PROLOGUES

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s WILD GALLANT, when firſt acted.

IS it not ſtrange, to hear a poet ſay,
He comes to aſk you, how you like the play?
You have not ſeen it yet! alas 'tis true,
But now your love and hatred judge, not you.
And cruel factions (brib'd by intereſt) come
Not to weigh merit, but to give their doom:
Our poet, therefore, jealous of th' event,
And (though much boldneſs takes) not confident,
Has ſent me, whether you, fair ladies, too
Sometimes upon ſmall occaſions go,

And from this ſcheme, drawn for the hour and day,
Bid me enquire the fortune of his play.

[*The curtain drawn diſcovers two Aſtrologers; the prologue is preſented to them.*

Firſt Aſtrol. reads. A Figure of the heavenly bodies in their ſeveral apartments, Feb. the 5th, half an hour after three, afternoon, from whence you are to judge the ſucceſs of a new Play called the *Wild Gallant*.

Second Aſtrol. Who muſt judge of it, we or theſe gentlemen? We'll not meddle with it, ſo tell your poet. Here are in this houſe the ableſt mathematicians in *Europe* for his purpoſe.

They will reſolve the queſtion e'er they part.

First Astrologer.

Yet let us judge it by the rules of art.
Firſt *Jupiter*, the aſcendant's lord diſgrac'd,
In the twelfth houſe, and near grim *Saturn* plac'd,
Denote ſhort life unto the play:——

Second Astrologer.

Jove yet,
In his apartments *Sagitary*, ſet
Under his own roof, cannot take much wrong;

First Astrologer.

Why then the life's not very ſhort nor long;

Second Astrologer.

The luck not very good, nor very ill.

Prologue.

That is to ſay, 'tis as 'tis taken ſtill.

First Astrologer.

But, brother, *Ptolemy* the learned ſays,
'Tis the fifth houſe from whence we judge of plays.
Venus the lady of that houſe I find
Is *Peregrine*, your play is ill deſign'd,
It ſhould have been but one continued ſong,
Or at the leaſt a dance of three hours long.

Second ASTROLOGER.

But yet the greateſt miſchief does remain,
The twelfth apartment bears the lord of *Spain*;
Whence I conclude it is your author's lot,
To be endanger'd by a *Spaniſh* plot.

PROLOGUE.

Our poet yet protection hopes from you,
But bribes you not with any thing that's new.
Nature is old, which poets imitate,
And for wit, thoſe that boaſt their own eſtate,
Forget *Fletcher* and *Ben* before them went,
Their elder brothers, and that vaſtly ſpent:
So much 'twill hardly be repair'd again,
Not, though ſupply'd with all the wealth of *Spain*.
This play is *Engliſh*, and the growth your own;
As ſuch it yields to *Engliſh* plays alone.
He could have wiſh'd it better for your ſakes;
But that in plays he finds you love miſtakes:
Beſides he thought it was in vain to mend
What you are bound in honour to defend,
That *Engliſh* Wit (howe'er deſpis'd by ſome)
Like *Engliſh* Valour ſtill may overcome.

EPILOGUE

When the WILD GALLANT was firſt acted.

THE *Wild Gallant* has quite play'd out his game;
He's marry'd now, and that will make him tame;
Or if you think marriage will not reclaim him,
The criticks ſwear they'll damn him, but they'll tame him.
Yet though our poet's threatned moſt by theſe,
They are the only people he can pleaſe;
For he to humour them, has ſhewn to-day,
That which they only like, a wretched play.

But though his play be ill, here have been ſhown
The greateſt wits and beauties of the town.
And his occaſion having brought you here,
You are too grateful to become ſevere.
There is not any perſon here ſo mean,
But he may freely judge each act and ſcene:
But if you bid him chuſe his judges then,
He boldly names true Engliſh Gentlemen:
For he ne'er thought a handſome garb or dreſs,
So great a crime to make their judgment leſs:
And with theſe gallants he theſe ladies joins,
To judge that language their converſe refines.
But if their cenſures ſhould condemn his play,
Far from diſputing, he does only pray,
He may *Leander*'s deſtiny obtain:
Now ſpare him, drown him when he comes again.

PROLOGUE

At the Revival of the WILD GALLANT.

AS ſome raw 'ſquire, by tender mother bred,
Till one and twenty keeps his maidenhead,
(Pleas'd with ſome ſport which he alone does find,
And thinks a ſecret to all human kind;)
Till mightily in love, yet half afraid,
He firſt attempts the gentle dairy maid:
Succeeding there, and led by the renown
Of *Whetſtone's-Park*, he comes at length to town,
Where enter'd by ſome ſchool-fellow, or friend,
He grows to break glaſs-windows in the end:
His valour too, which with the Watch began,
Proceeds to duel, and he kills his man.

By ſuch degrees, while knowledge he did want,
Our unfledg'd author writ a *Wild Gallant*.
He thought him monſtrous lewd (I'll lay my life)
Becauſe ſuſpected with his landlord's wife:
But ſince his knowledge of the town began,
He thinks him now a very civil man:
And, much aſham'd of what he was before,
Has fairly play'd him at three wenches more.
'Tis ſome amends his frailties to confeſs;
Pray pardon him his want of wickedneſs:
He's towardly, and will come on apace;
His frank confeſſion ſhews he has ſome grace.
You balk'd him when he was a young beginner,
And almoſt ſpoil'd a very hopeful ſinner:
But, if once more you ſlight his weak endeavour.
For ought I know, he may turn tail for ever.

EPILOGUE

On the ſame occaſion.

OF all dramatick writing, Comick Wit,
As 'tis the beſt, ſo 'tis moſt hard to hit.
For it lies all in level to the eye,
Where all may judge, and each defect may ſpy.
Humour is that which every day we meet,
And therefore known as every publick ſtreet;
In which, if e'er the poet go aſtray,
You all can point, 'twas there he loſt his way.
But, what's ſo common, to make pleaſant too,
Is more than any wit can always do.
For 'tis, like *Turks*, with Hen and Rice to treat;
To make regalio's out of common meat.
But, in your diet you grow ſavages:
Nothing but human fleſh your taſte can pleaſe:

And, as their feaſts with ſlaughter'd ſlaves began,
So you, at each new play, muſt have a Man.
Hither you come, as to ſee prizes fought;
If no blood's drawn, you cry the prize is naught.
But fools grow wary now; and when they ſee
A poet eying round the company,
Straight each man for himſelf begins to doubt;
They ſhrink like ſeamen when a preſs comes out.
Few of them will be found for publick uſe,
Except you charge an oaf upon each houſe,
Like the train'd-bands, and every man engage
For a ſufficient fool to ſerve the ſtage.
And, when with much ado you get him there,
Where he in all his glory ſhould appear,
Your poets make him ſuch rare things to ſay,
That he's more wit than any man i' th' play.
But of ſo ill a mingle with the reſt,
As when a parrot's taught to break a jeſt.
Thus aiming to be fine, they make a ſhow
As tawdry ſquires in country churches do.
Things well conſider'd, 'tis ſo hard to make
A Comedy, which ſhould the knowing take:
That our dull poet in deſpair to pleaſe,
Does humbly beg by me his writ of eaſe.
'Tis a land-tax which he's too poor to pay;
You, therefore muſt ſome other impoſt lay.
Would you but change for ſerious plot and verſe,
This motley garniture of fool and farce,
Nor ſcorn a mode, becauſe 'tis taught at home,
Which does, like veſts, our gravity become;
Our poet yields you ſhould this play refuſe,
As tradeſmen, by the change of faſhions, loſe
With ſome content their fripperies of *France*,
In hope it may their ſtaple trade advance.

PROLOGUE.

To *Dryden's* RIVAL LADIES.

'TIS much deſir'd, you judges of the town
Would paſs a vote to put all Prologues down;
For who can ſhew me, ſince they firſt were writ,
They e'er converted one hard-hearted wit?
Yet the world's mended well; in former days
Good *Prologues* were as ſcarce, as now good *Plays*.
For the reforming poets of our age,
In this firſt charge, ſpend their poetic rage:
Expect no more when once the *Prologue*'s done;
The wit is ended e'er the *Play*'s begun.
You now have habits, dances, ſcenes, and rhymes;
High language often; aye, and ſenſe, ſometimes:
As for a clear contrivance doubt it not;
They blow out candles to give light to th' plot.
And for ſurprize, two bloody-minded men
Fight 'till they die, then riſe and dance agen:
Such deep intrigues you're welcome to this day;
But blame yourſelves, not him who writ the play:
Though his plot's dull, as can be well deſir'd,
Wit ſtiff as any you have e'er admir'd:
He's bound to pleaſe, not to write well; and knows
There is a mode in plays as well as cloaths:
Therefore kind judges — — —

A SECOND PROLOGUE *enters.*

2d. — HOLD! would you admit
For judges all you ſee within the pit?

1ſt. Whom would he then except, or on what ſcore?

2d. All, who (like him) have writ ill plays before;
For they, like thieves condemn'd, are hangmen made,
To execute the members of their trade.

All that are writing now he would diſown:
But then he muſt except, e'en half the town.
All chol'rick, loſing gameſters, who in ſpight
Will damn to-day, becauſe they loſt laſt night:
All ſervants whom their miſtreſs' ſcorn upbraids;
All maudlin lovers, and all ſlighted maids:
All who are out of humour, or ſevere;
All, that want wit, or hope to find it here.

PROLOGUE.

To the INDIAN QUEEN ‡.

As the muſick plays a ſoft air, the curtain riſes ſlowly, and diſcovers an *Indian* Boy and Girl ſleeping under two Plantain-Trees; and when the curtain is almoſt up, the muſick turns into a tune expreſſing an alarm, at which the Boy wakes and ſpeaks.

BOY.

WAKE, wake *Quevira:* our ſoft reſt muſt ceaſe,
And fly together with our country's peace;
No more muſt we ſleep under Plantain ſhade,
Which neither heat could pierce, nor cold invade;
Where bounteous nature never feels decay,
And opening buds drive falling fruits away.

QUEVIRA.

Why ſhould men quarrel here, where all poſſeſs
As much as they can hope for by ſucceſs?
None can have moſt, where nature is ſo kind
As to exceed man's uſe, though not his mind.

BOY.

By antient propheſies we have been told
Our world ſhould be ſubdu'd by one more old;

‡ A Tragedy written by Sir *Robert Howard* and *Dryden*.

And ſee that world already 's hither come.

QUEVIRA.

If theſe be they, we welcome then our doom.
Their looks are ſuch, that mercy flows from thence,
More gentle than our native innocence.

BOY.

Why ſhould we then fear theſe are enemies,
That rather ſeem to us like Deities?

QUEVIRA.

By their protection let us beg to live;
They came not here to conquer, but forgive.
If ſo, your goodneſs may your power expreſs,
And we ſhall judge both beſt by our ſucceſs.

EPILOGUE.

To the INDIAN QUEEN. Spoken by *Montezuma.*

YOU ſee what ſhifts we are inforc'd to try.
To help out wit with ſome variety;
Shews may be found that never yet were ſeen,
'Tis hard to find ſuch wit as ne'er has been:
You have ſeen all that this old world could do,
We therefore try the fortune of the new,
And hope it is below your aim to hit
At untaught nature with your practis'd wit:
Our naked *Indians* then, when wits appear,
Would as ſoon chuſe to have the *Spaniards* here.
'Tis true, you 've marks enough, the plot, the ſhow,
The poet's ſcenes, nay more, the painter's too;
If all this fail, conſidering the coſt,
'Tis a true voyage to the *Indies* loſt:
But if you ſmile on all, then theſe deſigns,
Like the imperfect treaſure of our minds,
Will paſs for current whereſoe'er they go,
When to your bounteous hand, their ſtamps they owe.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s INDIAN EMPEROR.

ALmighty Criticks! Whom our *Indians* here
Worſhip, juſt as they do the Devil, for fear;
In reverence to your pow'r I come this day
To give you timely warning of our play.
The ſcenes are old, the habits are the ſame
We wore laſt year, before the *Spaniards* came.
Now, if you ſtay, the blood that ſhall be ſhed
From this poor play, be all upon your head.
We neither promiſe you one dance, or ſhow,
Then plot and language, they are wanting too:
But you kind wits will thoſe light faults excuſe:
Thoſe are the common frailties of the muſe,
Which who obſerves he buys his place too dear:
For 'tis your buſineſs to be cozen'd here.
Theſe wretched ſpies of wit muſt then confeſs
They take more pains to pleaſe themſelves the leſs.
Grant us ſuch judges, *Phœbus*, we requeſt,
As ſtill miſtake themſelves into a jeſt;
Such eaſy judges, that our poet may
Himſelf admire the fortune of his play;
And arrogantly, as his fellows do,
Think he writes well, becauſe he pleaſes you.
This he conceives not hard to bring about,
If all of you would join to help him out.
Would each man take but what he underſtands,
And leave the reſt upon the poet's hands.

EPILOGUE to the INDIAN EMPEROR.

Spoken by a MERCURY.

TO all and ſingular in this full Meeting,
Ladies and gallants, *Phœbus* ſends you greeting.
To all his ſons, by whate'er title known,
Whether of court, of coffee-houſe, or town;
From his moſt mighty ſons, whoſe confidence
Is plac'd in lofty ſound and humble ſenſe,
E'en to his little infants of the time
Who write new ſongs, and truſt in tune and rhyme.
Be't known that *Phœbus* (being daily griev'd
To ſee good plays condemn'd, and bad receiv'd,)
Ordains your judgment upon every cauſe,
Henceforth be limited by wholſome laws.
He firſt thinks fit no Sonneteer advance
His cenſure, farther than the ſong or dance.
Your Wit Burleſque may one ſtep higher climb,
And in his ſphere may judge all doggrel rhyme:
All *proves*, and *moves*, and *loves*, and *honours* too;
All that appears high ſenſe, and ſcarce is low.
As for the Coffee-Wits he ſays not much,
Their proper bus'neſs is to damn the *Dutch*.
For the great Dons of wit — — —
Phœbus gives them full privilege alone
To damn all others, and cry up their own.
Laſt, for the Ladies, 'tis *Apollo*'s will,
They ſhould have pow'r to ſave, but not to kill:
For Love and He long ſince have thought it fit,
Wit live by Beauty, Beauty reign by Wit.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s SECRET LOVE, or the MAIDEN QUEEN.

HE who writ this, not without pains and thought,
From *French*, and *Engliſh* theatres has brought,
Th'exacteſt rules, by which a play is wrought.
The unities of action, place, and time;
The ſcenes unbroken; and a mingled chime
Of *Johnſon*'s humour, with *Corneille*'s rhyme.
But while dead colours he with care did lay,
He fears his wit, or plot he did not weigh,
Which are the living beauties of a play.
Plays are like towns, which howe'er fortify'd
By Engineers, have ſtill ſome weaker ſide
By the o'erſeen defendant uneſpy'd.
And with that art you make approaches now;
Such ſkilful fury in aſſaults you ſhow,
That every poet without ſhame may bow.
Our's therefore humbly would attend your doom,
If ſoldier like, he may have terms to come
With flying colours, and with beat of drum.

[*The Prologue goes out, and ſtays while a tune is played, after which he returns again.*

SECOND PROLOGUE.

I Had forgot one half I do proteſt,
And now am ſent again to ſpeak the reſt.
He bows to every great and noble wit:
But to the little *Hectors* of the pit
Our poet's ſturdy, and will not ſubmit.
He'll be beforehand with them, and not ſtay
To ſee each peeviſh critick ſtab his play:

Each puny cenſor, who his ſkill to boaſt,
Is cheaply witty on the poet's coſt.
No critick's verdict, ſhould, of right, ſtand good,
They are excepted all as Men of Blood:
And the ſame law ſhould ſhield him from their fury,
Which has excluded Butchers from a Jury.
You'd all be wits — — — —
But writing's tedious, and that way may fail;
The moſt compendious method is to rail:
Which you ſo like, you think yourſelves ill us'd,
When in ſmart prologues you are not abus'd.
A civil prologue is approv'd by no man;
You hate it as you do a civil woman:
Your fancy's pall'd, and liberally you pay
To have it quickned, e'er you ſee a play:
Juſt as old ſinners worn from their delight,
Give money to be whipt to appetite.
But what a pox keep I ſo much ado
To ſave our poet? he is one of you;
A brother judgment, and as I hear ſay,
A curſed critic as e'er damn'd a play.
Good ſavage gentlemen! your own kind ſpare,
He is like you, a very wolf or bear;
Yet think not he'll your ancient rights invade,
Or ſtop the courſe of your free damning trade:
For he, (he vows) at no friend's play can ſit,
But he muſt needs find fault to ſhew his wit:
Then, for his ſake, ne'er ſtint your own delight;
Throw boldly, for he ſits to all that write;
With ſuch he ventures on an even lay,
For they bring ready money into play.
Thoſe who write not, and yet all writers nick,
Are bankrupt gameſters, for they damn on tick.

EPILOGUE

To the MAIDEN QUEEN: By a Perſon of Honour.

OUR Poet ſomething doubtful of his fate,
Made choice of me to be his advocate,
Relying on my Knowledge in the Laws,
And I as boldly undertook the cauſe.
I left my client yonder in a rant
Againſt the envious, and the ignorant,
Who are, he ſays, his only enemies:
But he contemns their malice, and defies
The ſharpeſt of his cenſurers to ſay
Where there is one groſs fault in all his play.
The language is ſo fitted for each part,
The plot according to the rules of art;
And twenty other things he bid me tell ye,
But I cry'd, e'en go do't yourſelf for *Nelly* †.
Reaſon with judges, urg'd in the defence
Of thoſe they would condemn, is inſolence;
I therefore wave the merits of his play,
And think it fit to plead this ſafer way.
If when too many in the purchaſe ſhare
Robbing's not worth the danger nor the care;
The men of buſineſs, muſt in policy,
Cheriſh a little harmleſs poetry:
All wit would elſe grow up to knavery.
Wit is a bird of muſick, or of prey,
Mounting ſhe ſtrikes at all things in her way;
But if this birdlime once but touch her wings,
On the next buſh ſhe ſits her down and ſings.
I have but one word more; tell me I pray
What you will get by damning of our play?

† Spoken by *Nell Gwynne.*

A whipt fanatick who does not recant
Is by his brethren call'd a ſuff'ring ſaint;
And by your hands ſhould this poor poet die
Before he does renounce his poetry,
His death muſt needs confirm the party more
Than all his ſcribbling life could do before.
Where ſo much zeal does in a ſect appear,
'Tis to no purpoſe, 'faith, to be ſevere.
But 'tother day I heard this rhyming fop
Say Criticks were the Whips, and He the Top;
For, as a Top ſpins more the more you baſte her,
So every laſh you give, He writes the faſter.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s Sir MARTIN MARR-ALL.

FOOLS, which each man meets in his diſh each day.
Are yet the great regalio's of a play;
In which to poets you but juſt appear,
To prize that higheſt which coſt them ſo dear:
Fops in the town more eaſily will paſs;
One ſtory makes a ſtatutable aſs:
But ſuch in plays muſt be much thicker ſown,
Like yolks of eggs, a dozen beat to one.
Obſerving poets all their walks invade,
As men watch woodcocks gliding through a glade:
And when they have enough for Comedy,
They ſtow their ſeveral bodies in a pie:
The poet's but the cook to faſhion it,
For, gallants, you yourſelves have found the wit.
To bid you welcome would your bounty wrong,
None welcome thoſe who bring their chear along.

EPILOGUE

To Sir MARTIN MAR-ALL.

AS country vicars, when the ſermon's done,
Run hudling to the benediction;
Well knowing, though the better ſort may ſtay,
The vulgar rout will run unbleſt away:
So we, when once our play is done, make haſte
With a ſhort epilogue to cloſe your taſte.
In thus withdrawing we ſeem mannerly,
But when the curtain's down we peep, and ſee
A jury of the wits who ſtill ſtay late,
And in their club decree the poor play's fate;
Their verdict back is to the boxes brought,
Thence all the town pronounces it their thought.
Thus, gallants, we like *Lilly* can foreſee;
But if you aſk us what our doom will be,
We by to-morrow will our fortune caſt,
As he tells all things when the year is paſt.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s TEMPEST.

AS when a tree's cut down the ſecret root
Lives underground, and thence new branches ſhoot;
So, from old *Shakeſpear*'s honour'd duſt, this day
Springs up and buds a new reviving play.
Shakeſpear, who (taught by none) did firſt impart
To *Fletcher* wit, to labouring *Johnſon* art.
He monarch-like gave thoſe his ſubjects law,
And is that nature which they paint and draw.

Fletcher reach'd that which on his heights did grow,
Whilſt *Johnſon* crept and gather'd all below.
This did his love, and this his mirth digeſt:
One imitates him moſt, the other beſt.
If they have ſince out-writ all other men,
'Tis with the drops which fell from *Shakeſpear*'s pen.
The ſtorm which vaniſh'd on the neighb'ring ſhore,
Was taught by *Shakeſpear*'s Tempeſt firſt to roar.
That innocence and beauty which did ſmile
In *Fletcher*, grew on this *Enchanted Iſle*.
But *Shakeſpear*'s magick could not copy'd be,
Within that circle none durſt walk but He.
I muſt confeſs 'twas bold, nor would you now,
That liberty to vulgar wits allow,
Which works by magick ſupernatural things:
But *Shakeſpear*'s pow'r is ſacred as a king's.
Thoſe legends from old prieſt-hood were receiv'd,
And he then writ, as people then believ'd.
But, if for *Shakeſpear* we your grace implore,
We for our theatre ſhall want it more:
Who by our dearth of youths are forc'd t' imploy
One of our women to preſent a boy.
And that's a transformation you will ſay
Exceeding all the magick in the play.
Let none expect in the laſt act to find,
Her ſex transform'd from man to woman-kind.
Whate'er ſhe was before the play began,
All you ſhall ſee of her is perfect man.
Or if your fancy will be farther led,
To find her woman, it muſt be in bed.

EPILOGUE

To the TEMPEST.

GALLANTS, by all good ſigns it does appear,
That Sixty Seven's a very damning year,
For knaves abroad, and for ill poets here.
Among the Muſes there's a gen'ral rot,
The rhyming Monſieur and the Spaniſh plot:
Deſie or court, all's one, they go to pot.
The ghoſts of poets walk within this place,
And haunt us actors whereſoe'er we paſs,
In viſions bloodier than king *Richard*'s was.
For this poor wretch he has not much to ſay
But quietly brings in his part o' th' play,
And begs the favour to be damn'd to-day.
He ſends me only like a Shrieve's man here
To let you know the malefactor's near;
And that he means to die, *en Cavalier*.
For if you ſhould be gracious to his pen,
Th' example will prove ill to other men,
And you'll be troubled with them all agen.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s MOCK ASTROLOGER.

WHEN firſt Our Poet ſet himſelf to write,
Like a young bridegroom on his wedding-night
He laid about him, and did ſo beſtir him,
His Muſe could never lie in quiet for him:
But now his honey-moon is gone and paſt,
Yet the ungrateful drudgery muſt laſt:

And he is bound, as civil huſbands do,
To ſtrain himſelf, in complaiſance to you:
To write in pain and counterfeit a bliſs,
Like the faint ſmacking of an after-kiſs.
But you, like wives ill pleas'd, ſupply his want;
Each writing *Monſieur*, is a freſh Gallant:
And though, perhaps, 'twas done as well before,
Yet ſtill there's ſomething in a new amour.
Your ſeveral poets work with ſeveral tools,
One gets you wits, another gets you fools:
This pleaſes you with ſome bye-ſtroke of wit,
This finds ſome cranny that was never hit.
But ſhould theſe janty lovers daily come
To do your work, like your good man at home,
Their fine ſmall-timber'd wits would ſoon decay;
Theſe are gallants but for a holiday.
Others you had who oftner have appear'd,
Whom, for meer impotence you have caſhier'd:
Such as at firſt came on with pomp and glory,
But, over-ſtraining, ſoon fell flat before ye.
Their uſeleſs weight, with patience long was born,
But at the laſt you threw them off with ſcorn.
As for the poet of this preſent night,
Though now he claims in you a huſband's right,
He will not hinder you of freſh delight.
He, like a ſeaman, ſeldom will appear;
And means to trouble home but thrice a year:
That only time from your gallants he'll borrow;
Be kind to-day, and cuckold him to-morrow.

EPILOGUE

To the Mock Astrologer.

MY part being ſmall, I have had time to-day,
To mark your various cenſures of our play:
Firſt, looking for a judgment or a wit,
Like *Jews* I ſaw 'em ſcatter'd through the pit:
And where a knot of ſmilers lent an ear
To one that talk'd, I knew the foe was there.
The club of jeſts went round; he who had none
Borrow'd o' th' next, and told it for his own:
Among the reſt they kept a fearful ſtir,
In whiſp'ring that he ſtole th' *Aſtrologer*;
And ſaid betwixt a *French* and *Engliſh* plot
He eas'd his half-tir'd muſe, on pace and trot.
Up ſtarts a *Monſieur*, new come o'er; and warm
In the *French* ſtoop; and the pull-back o' th' arm;
Morbleu dit il, and cocks, I am a rogue
But he has quite ſpoil'd the *Feign'd Aſtrologue*.
'Pox, ſays another; here's ſo great a ſtir
With a ſon of a whore farce that's regular,
A rule where nothing muſt *decorum* ſhock!
Damn me 'ts as dull as dining by the clock.
An evening! why the devil ſhould we be vext,
Whether he gets the wench this night or next?
When I heard this, I to the poet went,
Told him the houſe was full of diſcontent,
And aſk'd him what excuſe he could invent.
He neither ſwore or ſtorm'd as poets do,
But, moſt unlike an author, vow'd 'twas true.
Yet ſaid, he us'd the *French* like enemies,
And did not ſteal their plots, but made 'em prize.

But ſhould he all the pains and charges count
Of taking them, the bill ſo high would mount,
That like prize goods, which through the office come,
He could have had them much more cheap at home.
He ſtill muſt write; and banker-like, each day
Accept new bills, and he muſt break, or pay.
When through his hands ſuch ſums muſt yearly run,
You cannot think the ſtock is all his own.
His haſte his other errors might excuſe;
But there's no mercy for a guilty Muſe:
For like a miſtreſs, ſhe muſt ſtand or fall,
And pleaſe you to a height, or not at all.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s TYRANNICK LOVE.

SElf-love (which never rightly underſtood)
Makes poets ſtill conclude their plays are good;
And malice in all criticks runs ſo high,
That for ſmall errors, they whole plays decry;
So that to ſee this fondneſs, and that ſpite,
You'd think that none but mad-men judge or write.
Therefore Our Poet, as he thinks not fit
T' impoſe upon you what he writes, for wit,
So hopes that leaving you your cenſures free
You equal judges of the whole will be:
They judge but half who only faults will ſee.
Poets, like lovers, ſhould be bold and dare,
They ſpoil their buſineſs with an over-care:
And he who ſervilely creeps after ſenſe,
Is ſafe, but ne'er will reach an excellence.
Hence 'tis, our poet in his conjuring,
Allow'd his fancy the full ſcope and ſwing.

But when a tyrant for his theme he had,
He loos'd the reins and bid his muſe run mad:
And though he ſtumbles in a full career;
Yet raſhneſs is a better fault than fear.
He ſaw his way; but in ſo ſwift a pace,
To chuſe the ground, might be to loſe the race.
They then who of each trip th' advantage take,
Find but thoſe faults which they want wit to make.

EPILOGUE

To the TYRANNICK LOVE.

Spoken by Mrs. *Ellen Gwynne*, when ſhe was to be carried off dead.

HOLD are you mad? you damn'd confounded dog,
I am to riſe and ſpeak the Epilogue. [*To the bearer. To the Audience.*] I'm come, kind gentlemen, ſtrange news to tell ye,
I am the ghoſt of poor departed *Nelly*.
Sweet ladies, be not frighted, I'll be civil,
I'm what I was, a little harmleſs devil.
For after death, we ſprights have juſt ſuch natures,
We had for all the world, when human creatures;
And therefore I that was an actreſs here,
Play all my tricks in hell, a goblin there.
Gallants look to 't, you ſay there are no ſprights;
But I'll come dance about your beds at nights.
And faith you'll be in a ſweet kind of taking,
When I ſurpriſe you between ſleep and waking.
To tell you true, I walk becauſe I die
Out of my calling, in a tragedy.
O poet! damn'd dull poet, who could prove
So ſenſeleſs to make *Nelly* die for love:

Nay what's yet worſe, to kill me in the prime
Of *Eaſter* term, in tart and cheeſecake-time:
I'll fit the fop, for I'll not one word ſay
T' excuſe his godly, out-of-faſhion play.
A play, which if you dare but twice ſit out,
You'll all be ſlander'd, and be thought devout.
But farewell, gentlemen, make haſte to me,
I'm ſure e'er long to have your company.
As for my epitaph, when I am gone,
I'll truſt no poet, but will write my own.

Here Nelly *lies, who, though ſhe liv'd a ſlatern,*
Yet dy'd a princeſs acting in St. Cath'rin.

PROLOGUE

To the Firſt Part of *Dryden*'s CONQUEST of GRANADA.

Spoken by Mrs. *Ellen Guyn*, in a broad-brimm'd Hat, and Waiſt-belt.

THIS jeſt was firſt of th' other houſe's making,
And five times try'd has never fail'd of taking.
For, 'twere a ſhame a poet ſhould be kill'd
Under the ſhelter of ſo broad a ſhield.
This is that Hat, whoſe very ſight did win ye
To laugh and clap as though the devil were in ye.
As then, for *Nokes*, ſo now I hope you'll be
So dull, to laugh once more for love of me.
I'll write a play ſays one, for I have got
A broad-brim'd Hat, and Waiſt-belt towards a plot.
Says th' other, I have one more large than that.
Thus they out-write each other with a hat.
The brims ſtill grew with every play they writ;
And grew ſo large they cover'd all the wit.

Hat was the play: 'twas language, wit and tale:
Like them that find meat, drink, and cloth in ale.
What dulneſs do theſe mungrel wits confeſs,
When all their hope is acting of a dreſs!
Thus, Two the beſt comedians of the age
Muſt be worn out, with being blocks o' th' ſtage;
Like a young girl, who better things has known,
Beneath their poet's impotence they groan.
See now what charity it was to ſave?
They thought you lik'd what only you forgave:
And brought you more dull ſenſe, dull ſenſe much worſe
Than briſk gay nonſenſe, and the heavier curſe.
They bring old ir'n and glaſs upon the ſtage,
To barter with the *Indians* of our age.
Still they write on, and like great authors ſhew:
But 'tis as rollers in wet gardens grow
Heavy with dirt, and gathering as they go.
May none who have ſo little underſtood
To like ſuch traſh, preſume to praiſe what's good!
And may thoſe drudges of the ſtage, whoſe fate
Is damn'd dull farce more dully to tranſlate,
Fall under that exciſe the ſtate thinks fit
To ſet on all *French* wares, whoſe worſt is wit.
French farce worn out at home, is ſent abroad;
And patch'd up here, is made our *Engliſh* mode.
Henceforth let poets, e'er allow'd to write,
Be ſearch'd, like duelliſts, before they fight,
For wheel-broad hats, dull humour, all that chaff
Which makes you mourn, and makes the vulgar laugh:
For theſe, in plays, are as unlawful arms,
As in a combat, coats of mail, and charms.

EPILOGUE

To the First Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

SUCCESS, which can no more than beauty laſt,
Makes our ſad poet mourn your favours paſt:
For, ſince without deſert he got a name,
He fears to loſe it now with greater ſhame.
Fame like a little miſtreſs of the town,
Is gain'd with eaſe; but then ſhe's loſt as ſoon.
For, as thoſe tawdry miſſes, ſoon or late
Jilt ſuch as keep them at the higheſt rate,
(And oft the lacquey or the brawny clown,
Gets what is hid in the looſe body'd gown;)
So, Fame is falſe to all that keep her long;
And turns up to the fop that's briſk and young.
Some wiſer poet now would leave Fame firſt:
But elder wits are, like old lovers, curſt;
Who, when the vigour of their youth is ſpent,
Still grow more fond as they grow impotent.
This, ſome years hence, our poet's caſe may prove;
But, yet, he hopes, he's young enough to love.
When forty comes, if e'er he lives to ſee
That wretched fumbling age of poetry,
'Twill be high time to bid his Muſe adieu:
Well he may pleaſe himſelf, but never you.
'Till then he'll do as well as he began;
And hopes you will not find him leſs a man.
Think him not duller for this year's delay;
He was prepar'd, the women were away;
And men, without *their* parts, can hardly play.
If they, through ſickneſs, ſeldom did appear,
Pity the virgins of each theatre;
For, at both houſes, 'twas a ſickly year!

And pity us, your ſervants, to whoſe coſt,
In one ſuch ſickneſs, nine whole months are loſt.
Their ſtay, he fears, has ruin'd what he writ:
Long waiting both diſables love and wit.
They thought they gave him leiſure to do well:
But when they forc'd him to attend, he fell!
Yet though he much has fail'd, he begs to-day
You will excuſe his unperforming play:
Weakneſs ſometimes great paſſion does expreſs;
He had pleas'd better, had he lov'd you leſs.

PROLOGUE

To the Second Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

THEY who write ill, and they who ne'er durſt write,
Turn Criticks out of mere revenge and ſpight.
A Playhouſe gives 'em fame; and up there ſtarts,
From a mean fifth-rate wit, a man of parts.
(So common faces on the ſtage appear:
We take 'em in; and they turn beauties here)
Our author fears thoſe Criticks as his fate:
And thoſe he fears, by conſequence, muſt hate.
For they the traffick of all wit invade;
As ſcriv'ners draw away the banker's trade.
Howe'er, the poet's ſafe enough to-day:
They cannot cenſure an unfiniſh'd play.
But, as when vizard maſk appears in pit,
Straight, every man who thinks himſelf a wit,
Perks up, and managing his comb, with grace,
With his white wig ſets off his nut-brown face:
That done, bears up to th' prize, and views each limb;
To know her by her rigging and her trim:

Then, the whole noiſe of fops to wagers go,
Pox on her, 't muſt be ſhe; and *dam' me* no;
Juſt ſo I propheſy theſe wits to day
Will blindly gueſs at our imperfect play:
With what new plots our ſecond part is fill'd;
Who muſt be kept alive, and who be kill'd.
And as thoſe vizard maſks maintain that faſhion,
To ſooth and tickle ſweet imagination;
So, our dull poet keeps you on with maſking,
To make you think there's ſomething worth your aſking:
But when 'tis ſhewn, that which does now delight you,
Will prove a dowdy with a face to fright you.

EPILOGUE

To the Second Part of the CONQUEST of GRANADA.

THEY, who have beſt ſucceeded on the ſtage,
Have ſtill conform'd their genius to their age.
Thus *Johnſon* did mechanick humour ſhow,
When men were dull, and converſation low.
Then, comedy was faultleſs, but 'twas coarſe:
Cobb's Tankard was a jeſt, and *Otter*'s Horſe.
And as their comedy, their love was mean;
Except, by chance, in ſome one labour'd ſcene,
Which muſt attone for an ill-written play.
They roſe; but at their height could ſeldom ſtay.
Fame then was cheap, and the firſt-comer ſped;
And they have kept it ſince, by being dead.
But were they *now* to write, when criticks weigh
Each line, and ev'ry word, throughout a play,
None of them, no not Johnſon in his height,
Could paſs without allowing grains for weight.

Think it not envy that theſe truths are told;
Our Poet's not malicious, though he's bold.
'Tis not to brand 'em that their faults are ſhewn,
But by their errors to excuſe his own.
If love and honour now are higher rais'd,
'Tis not the poet but the age are prais'd.
Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree;
Our native language more refin'd and free.
Our ladies and our men now ſpeak more wit
In converſation, than thoſe poets writ:
Then, one of theſe is, conſequently, true;
That what this poet writes comes ſhort of you,
And imitates you ill, (which moſt he fears)
Or elſe his writing is not worſe than theirs.
Yet though you judge, (as ſure the criticks will)
That ſome before him writ with greater ſkill;
In this one praiſe he has their fame ſurpaſt,
To pleaſe an age more gallant than the laſt.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

LORD, how reform'd and quiet are we grown,
Since all our Braves, and all our Wits are gone!
Fop-Corner now is free from civil war:
White wig and vizard make no longer jar.
France and the fleet, have ſwept the town ſo clear,
That we can act in peace, and you can hear.
'Twas a ſad ſight before they march'd from home,
To ſee our warriors in red waiſtcoats, come,
With hair tuck'd up, into our tiring-room.
But 'twere more ſad to hear their laſt adieu;
The women ſob'd, and ſwore they would be true;

And ſo they were as long as e'er they cou'd:
But powerful Guinea cannot be withſtood,
And they were made of Playhouſe fleſh and blood.
Fate did their friends for double uſe ordain,
In wars abroad, they grinning honour gain,
And miſtreſſes for all that ſtay maintain.
Now they are gone, 'tis dead vacation here,
For neither friends nor enemies appear.
Poor penſive punk now peeps 'ere plays begin,
Sees the bare bench, and dares not venture in:
But manages her laſt half crown with care,
And trudges to the Mall on foot for air.
Our city friends ſo far will hardly come;
They can take up with pleaſures nearer home;
And ſee gay ſhows, and gaudy ſcenes elſewhere:
For we preſume they ſeldom come to hear.
But they have now ta'en up a glorious trade,
And cutting Moorcraft ſtruts in maſquerade.
There's all our hope, for we ſhall ſhew to-day,
A maſking ball, to recommend our play.
Nay, to endear 'em more, and let 'em ſee,
We ſcorn to come behind in courteſy,
We'll follow the new mode which they begin,
And treat 'em with a room and couch, within:
For that's one way, howe'er the play fall ſhort,
T' oblige the town, the city, and the court.

EPILOGUE
To MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

THUS have my ſpouſe and I inform'd the nation,
And led you all the way to reformation.
Not with dull morals, gravely writ, like thoſe,
Which men of eaſy phlegm, with care compoſe:

Your poets of ſtiff words and limber ſenſe,
Born on the confines of indifference.
But by examples drawn, I dare to ſay,
From moſt of you, who hear, and ſee the play.
There are more Rhodophils in this theatre,
More Palamedes, and ſome few wives I fear.
But yet too far our poet would not run;
Though 'twas well offer'd, there was nothing done.
He would not quite the woman's frailty bare,
But ſtript 'em to the waſte, and left 'em there.
And the men's faults are leſs ſeverely ſhown,
For he conſiders that himſelf is one.
Some ſtabbing wits, to bloody ſatire bent,
Would treat both ſexes with leſs compliment:
Would lay the ſcene at home, of huſbands tell,
For wenches, taking up their wives i' th' Mell,
And a briſk bout, which each of them did want,
Made by miſtake of miſtreſs and gallant.
Our modeſt author thought it was enough
To cut you off a ſample of the ſtuff:
He ſpar'd my ſhame, which you, I'm ſure would not,
For you were all for driving on the plot:
You ſigh'd when I came in to break the ſport,
And ſet your teeth when each deſign fell ſhort.
To wives and ſervants all good wiſhes lend,
But the poor cuckold ſeldom finds a friend.
Since therefore court and town will take no pity,
I humbly caſt myſelf upon the city.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s LOVE IN A NUNNERY.

PROLOGUES, like bells to churches, toll you in
With chiming verſe till the dull plays begin:
With this ſad difference though of pit and pew,
You damn the Poet but the Prieſt damns you.
But Prieſts can treat you at your own expence:
And, gravely, call you fools, without offence.
Poets, poor devils, have ne'er your folly ſhown
But, to their coſt, you prov'd it was their own.
For, when a fop's preſented on the ſtage,
Strait all the coxcombs in the town engage:
For his deliverance, and revenge they join:
And grunt like hogs about their captive ſwine.
Your poets daily ſplit upon this ſhelf:
You muſt have fools, yet none will have himſelf.
Or, if in kindneſs, you that leave would give,
No man could write you at that rate you live:
For ſome of you grow fops with ſo much haſte,
Riot in nonſenſe, and commit ſuch waſte,
'Twould ruin poets ſhould they ſpend ſo faſt.
He who made this, obſerv'd what Farces hit,
And durſt not diſoblige you now with Wit.
But, gentlemen, you over-do the mode:
You muſt have fools out of the common road.
Th' unnatural ſtrain'd buffoon is only taking:
No fop can pleaſe you now of God's own making.
Pardon our poet if he ſpeaks his mind,
You come to plays with your own follies lin'd.
Small fools fall on you, like ſmall ſhowers, in vain:
Your own oil'd coats keep out all common rain,

You muſt have *Mamamouchi*, ſuch a ſop
As would appear a Monſter in a ſhop;
He'll fill your pit, and boxes to the brim,
Where, ram'd in crowds, you ſee yourſelves in him.
Sure there's ſome ſpell our poet never knew,
In *Hullibabilah de*, and *Chu, chu, chu.*
But *Marabarah ſahem* moſt did touch you,
That is: Oh how we love the *Mamamouchi!*
Grimace and habit ſent you pleas'd away:
You damn'd the poet, and cry'd up the play.
This thought had made our author more uneaſy,
But that he hopes I'm fool enough to pleaſe ye.
But here's my grief; though nature join'd with art,
Have cut me out to act a fooling part;
Yet, to your praiſe, the few wits here will ſay,
'Twas imitating you taught *Haynes* to play.

EPILOGUE

To Love in a Nunnery.

SOME have expected from our bills to-day,
To find a ſatire in our poet's play.
The zealous rout from Coleman-ſtreet did run.
To ſee the ſtory of the Friar and Nun.
Or tales, yet more ridiculous to hear,
Vouch'd by their vicar of ten pounds a year;
Of Nuns, who did againſt temptation pray,
And diſcipline laid on the pleaſant way:
Or that to pleaſe the malice of the town,
Our poet ſhould in ſome cloſe cell have ſhewn
Some ſiſter playing at content alone.
This they did hope; the other ſide did fear:
And both, you ſee, alike are cozen'd here.

Some thought the title of our play to blame;
They lik'd the thing, but yet abhorr'd the name:
Like modeſt punks, who all you aſk afford,
But for the world they would not name that word.
Yet, if you'll credit what I heard him ſay,
Our poet meant no ſcandal in his play;
His Nuns are good which on the ſtage are ſhown,
And ſure behind our Scenes you'll look for none.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s AMBOYNA.

AS needy gallants, in the ſcriv'ners hands,
Court the rich knave that gripes their mortgag'd lands,
The firſt fat buck of all the ſeaſon's ſent
And keeper takes no fee in compliment:
The dotage of ſome Engliſhmen is ſuch,
To fawn on thoſe who ruin them, the Dutch.
They ſhall have all, rather than make a war
With thoſe who of the ſame religion are.
The Streights, the Guiney trade, the Herrings too,
Nay, to keep freindſhip, they ſhall pickle you.
Some are reſolv'd not to find out the cheat,
But, cuckold-like, love him who does the feat.
What injuries ſoe'er upon us fall,
Yet ſtill the ſame religion anſwers all.
Religion wheedled you to civil war,
Drew Engliſh blood, and Dutchmens now would ſpare.
Be gull'd no longer, for you'll find it true.
They have no more religion, faith — than you.
Intereſt's the God they worſhip in their ſtate,
And you, I take it, have not much of that.

Well Monarchies may own religion's name,
But States are atheiſts in their very frame.
They ſhare a ſin, and ſuch proportions fall,
That, like a ſtink, 'tis nothing to 'em all.
How they love England, you ſhall ſee this day:
No map ſhews Holland truer than our play.
Their pictures and inſcriptions well we know;
We may be bold one medal ſure to ſhew.
View then their falſhoods, rapine, cruelty;
And think what once they were, they ſtill would be:
But hope not either language, plot, or art;
'Twas writ in haſte, but with an Engliſh heart:
And leſs hope wit in Dutchmen; that would be
As much improper as would honeſty.

EPILOGUE

To Amboyna.

A Poet once the Spartans led to fight,
And made 'em conquer in the Muſe's right:
So would our poet lead you on this day,
Shewing your tortur'd fathers in his play.
To one well-born, th' affront is worſe and more,
When he's abus'd and baffled by a boor.
With an ill grace the Dutch their miſchief do;
They've both ill nature, and ill manners too.
Well may they boaſt themſelves an ancient nation;
For they were bred ere manners were in faſhion:
And their new commonwealth has ſet them free,
Only from honour and civility.
Venetians do not more uncouthly ride,
Than did their lubber-ſtate mankind beſtride.

Their ſway became 'em with as ill a mien,
As their own paunches ſwell above their chin:
Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,
And only two king's touch can cure the tumour.
As Cato did his Africk fruits diſplay:
So we before your eyes their Indies lay.
All loyal Engliſh will like him conclude;
Let Cæſar live, and Carthage be ſubdu'd.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s AURENGE ZEBE, or the GREAT MOGUL.

OUR author by experience finds it true,
'Tis much more hard to pleaſe himſelf, than you:
And out of no feign'd modeſty, this day,
Damns his laborious trifle of a play:
Not that it's worſe than what before he writ,
But he has now another taſte of wit;
And to confeſs a truth, (though out of time)
Grows weary of his long-lov'd miſtreſs, Rhime.
Paſſion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And Nature flies him like enchanted ground.
What verſe can do he has perform'd in this,
Which he preſumes the moſt correct of his.
But ſpite of all his pride, a ſecret ſhame
Invades his breaſt at Shakeſpear's ſacred name:
Aw'd when he hears his god-like Romans rage,
He, in a juſt deſpair, would quit the ſtage.
And to an age leſs poliſh'd, more unſkill'd,
Does, with diſdain, the foremoſt honours yield.
As with the greater dead he dares not ſtrive,
He would not match his verſe with thoſe who live:

Let him retire, betwixt two ages caſt,
The firſt of this and hindmoſt of the laſt.
A loſing gameſter let him ſneak away;
He bears no ready money from the play.
The fate which governs poets thought it fit,
He ſhould not raiſe his fortunes by his wit.
The clergy thrive, and the litigious bar;
Dull heroes fatten with the ſpoils of war;
All ſouthern vices, heav'n be prais'd, are here;
But wit's a luxury you think too dear.
When you to cultivate the plant are loth,
'Tis a ſhrewd ſign 'twas never of your growth:
And wit in northern climates will not blow,
Except, like Orange-trees, 'tis hous'd from ſnow.
There needs no care to put a play-houſe down,
'Tis the moſt deſart place of all the town.
We and our neighbours, to ſpeak proudly, are
Like monarchs, ruin'd with expenſive war.
While, like wiſe Engliſh, unconcern'd, you ſit,
And ſee us play the Tragedy of Wit.

EPILOGUE

To Aurenge Zebe, or the Great Mogul.

A Pretty taſk! and ſo I told the fool,
Who needs would undertake to pleaſe by rule.
He thought that if his characters were good,
The ſcenes entire, and freed from noiſe and blood.
The action great, yet circumſcrib'd by time,
The words not forc'd, but ſliding into Rhime,
The paſſions rais'd and calm'd by juſt degrees,
As tides are ſwell'd, and then retire to ſeas.

He thought, in hitting theſe, his buſ'neſs done,
Though he, perhaps, has fail'd in ev'ry one.
But, after all, a poet muſt confeſs,
His art's like phyſick, but a happy gueſs.
Your pleaſure on your fancy muſt depend:
The lady's pleas'd, juſt as ſhe likes her friend.
No ſong! no dance! no ſhew! he fears you'll ſay,
You love all naked beauties but a play.
He much miſtakes your methods to delight;
And, like the French, abhors our target fight:
But thoſe damn'd dogs can never be i' th' right.
True Engliſh hate your Monſieur's paultry arts;
For you are all ſilk-weavers in your hearts.
Bold Britons, at a brave bear-garden fray,
Are rouz'd: and clattering ſticks, cry, *play, play, play.*
Mean time, your filthy foreigner will ſtare,
And mutter to himſelf, *Ha gens barbare!*
And, Gad, 'tis well he mutters; well for him;
Our butchers elſe would tear him limb from limb.
'Tis true, the time may come, your ſons may be
Infected with this French civility.
But this in after ages will be done:
Our poet writes an hundred years too ſoon.
This age comes on too ſlow, or he too faſt:
And early ſprings are ſubject to a blaſt!
Who would excel, when few can make a teſt
Betwixt indiff'rent writing and the beſt?
For favours cheap and common who would ſtrive,
Which, like abandon'd proſtitutes, you give?
Yet ſcatter'd here and there, I ſome behold,
Who can diſcern the tinſel from the gold.
To theſe he writes; and if by them allow'd,
'Tis their prerogative to rule the crowd.
For he more fears, (like a preſuming man)
Their votes who cannot judge, than theirs who can.

PROLOGUE.

To *Dryden*'s ALL for LOVE, or the WORLD WELL LOST.

WHAT flocks of criticks hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcaſs of a play!
With croaking notes they bode ſome dire event;
And follow dying poets by the ſcent.
Ours gives himſelf for gone; y'ave watch'd your time!
He fights this day unarm'd, without his rhime;
And brings a tale which often has been told;
As ſad as Dido's, and almoſt as old.
His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and ſcarce rants at all:
He's ſomewhat lewd; but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much; fights little; and is wondrous kind.
In ſhort, a patron, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies of the pit.
I could name more; a wife, and miſtreſs too:
Both (to be plain) too good for moſt you:
The wife well-natur'd, and the miſtreſs true.
Now, poets, if your fame has been his care;
Allow him all the candour you can ſpare.
A brave man ſcorns to quarrel once a day;
Like Hectors, in at every petty fray:
Let thoſe find fault whoſe wit's ſo very ſmall,
They've need to ſhew that they can think at all:
Errors like ſtraws upon the ſurface flow;
He who would ſearch for pearls muſt dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can;
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.

Half-wits are fleas; ſo little and ſo light;
We ſcarce could know they live, but that they bite.
But, as the rich, when tir'd with daily feaſts,
For change, become their next poor tenant's gueſts;
Drink hearty draughts of ale, from plain brown bowls,
And ſnatch the homely raſher from the coals:
So you, retiring from much better cheer,
For once may venture to do penance here.
And ſince that plenteous autumn now is paſt,
Whoſe grapes and peaches have indulg'd your taſte,
Take in good part from our poor poet's board,
Such rivell'd fruits as winter can afford.

EPILOGUE

To ALL for LOVE, or the WORLD WELL LOST.

POETS, like diſputants, when reaſons fail,
Have one ſure refuge left, and that's to rail;
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thunder'd through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
Betwixt our fools in verſe, and yours in proſe?
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly underſtood,
'Tis civil war with their own fleſh and blood.
The thread-bare author hates the gaudy coat;
And ſwears at the gilt coach, but ſwears a-foot:
For 'tis obſerv'd of ev'ry ſcribling man,
He grows a fop as faſt as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and aſks the oracle his glaſs,
If pink or purple beſt becomes his face.
For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
Nor likes your wit juſt as you like his plays;
He has not yet ſo much of Mr. Bayes.

He does his beſt; and if he cannot pleaſe,
Would quietly ſue out his Writ of Eaſe.
Yet, if he might his own Grand Jury call,
By the fair ſex he begs to ſtand or fall.
Let Cæſar's pow'r the men's ambition move,
But grace you him who loſt the World for Love.
Yet if ſome antiquated ladies ſay,
The laſt age is not copy'd in his play;
Heav'n help the man who for that face muſt drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with thoſe;
For ſhould you raiſe ſuch numerous hoſts of foes,
Young wits and ſparks he to his aid muſt call;
'Tis more than one man's work to pleaſe you all.

EPILOGUE

To *Dryden*'s LIMBERHAM, or the KIND KEEPER.

Spoken by LIMBERHAM.

I Beg a boon, that e're you all diſband.
Some one would take my bargain off my hand;
To keep a punk is but a common evil,
To find her falſe, and marry, that's the devil.
Well, I ne'er acted part in all my life,
But ſtill I was fobb'd off with ſome ſuch wife:
I find the trick; theſe poets have no pity
Of one that is a member of the city.
We cheat you lawfully, and in our trades,
You cheat us baſely with your common jades.
Now I am marry'd, I muſt ſit down by it;
But let me keep my dear-bought ſpouſe in quiet:

Let none of you damn'd Woodalls of the pit,
Put in for ſhares, to mend our breed in Wit;
We know your baſtards from our fleſh and blood,
Not one in ten of yours e'er comes to good;
In all the boys their fathers virtues ſhine,
But all the female fry turn Pugs like mine.
When theſe grow up, lord! with what rampant gadders
Our counters will be throng'd, and roads with padders.
This town two bargains has, not worth one farthing,
A Smithfield Horſe, and Wife of Covent-Garden.

PROLOGUE

To OEDIPUS; written by *Dryden* and *Lee*.

WHEN Athens all the Grecian State did guide,
And Greece gave laws to all the world beſide,
Then Sophocles with Socrates did ſit,
Supreme in Wiſdom one, and one in Wit;
And Wit from Wiſdom differ'd not in thoſe,
But as 'twas ſung in verſe, or ſaid in proſe.
Then Oedipus on crowned Theatres,
Drew all admiring eyes and liſtning ears;
The pleas'd ſpectator ſhouted every line,
The nobleſt, manlieſt, and the beſt deſign!
And every critic of each learned age,
By this juſt model has reform'd the ſtage.
Now, ſhould it fail, (as heav'n avert our fear!)
Damn it in ſilence, leſt the world ſhould hear.
For were it known this poem did not pleaſe,
You might ſet up for perfect ſavages:
Your neighbours would not look on you as men;
But think the nation all turn'd Picts agen.

'Faith, as you manage matters 'tis not fit
You ſhould ſuſpect yourſelves of too much wit.
Drive not the jeſt too far, but ſpare this piece:
And for this once be not more wiſe than Greece.
See twice! Do not pell-mell to damning fall,
Like true-born Britons, who ne'er think at all:
Pray be adviſ'd; and though at Mons you won,
On pointed cannon do not always run.
With ſome reſpect to ancient wit proceed;
You take the four firſt councils for your Creed.
But when you lay tradition wholly by,
And on the private ſpirit alone rely,
You turn fanaticks in your poetry.
If, notwithſtanding all that we can ſay,
You needs will have your pen'worths of the Play:
And come reſolv'd to damn, becauſe you pay,
Record it, in memorial of the fact,
The firſt Play buried ſince the Woollen Act.

EPILOGUE

To OEDIPUS.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone,
Our Poets found a work for more than one;
And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
With all their force, to draw the pondrous maſs from Greece.
A weight that bent even Seneca's ſtrong muſe;
And which Corneille's ſhoulders did refuſe.
So hard it is the Athenian harp to ſtring!
So much two conſuls yield to one juſt king.
Terror and pity this whole poem ſway;
The mightieſt machines that can mount a Play:

How heavy will theſe vulgar ſouls be found,
Whom two ſuch engines cannot move from ground?
When Greece and Rome have ſmil'd upon this birth,
You can but damn for one poor ſpot of earth:
And when your children find your judgment ſuch,
They'll ſcorn their ſires, and wiſh themſelves born Dutch;
Each haughty poet will infer with eaſe,
How much his wit muſt underwrite to pleaſe.
As ſome ſtrong churl would brandiſhing advance
The monumental ſword that conquer'd France;
So you, by judging this, your judgments teach,
Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach,
Since then the vote of full two thouſand years
Has crown'd this plot, and all the dead are theirs;
Think it a debt you pay, not alms you give,
And in your own defence, let this play live.
Think them not vain, when Sophocles is ſhewn,
To praiſe his worth they humbly doubt their own,
Yet as weak ſtates each others pow'r aſſure,
Weak poets, by conjunction are ſecure.
Their treat is what your palates reliſh moſt,
Charm! ſong! and ſhew! a murder, and a ghoſt!
We know not what you can deſire or hope,
To pleaſe you more, but burning of a Pope.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden's* TROILUS and CRESSIDA.

Spoken by Mr. Betterton, repreſenting the Ghoſt of Shakeſpeare.

SEE my lov'd Britons, ſee your Shakeſpeare riſe,
An awful ghoſt confeſs'd to human eyes!
Unnam'd, methinks, diſtinguiſh'd I had been,
From other ſhades by this eternal green,
About whoſe wreaths the vulgar poets ſtrive,
And with a touch their wither'd bays revive.
Untaught, unpractis'd in a barbarous age,
I found not but created firſt the ſtage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin ſtore,
'Twas that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely,
Like fruitful Britain, rich without ſupply.
In this my roughdrawn play, you ſhall behold
Some maſter-ſtrokes, ſo manly and ſo bold,
That he, who meant to alter, found them ſuch,
He ſhook; and thought it ſacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the ſucceſſors to my name?
What bring they to fill out a poet's fame?
Weak, ſhort-liv'd iſſues of a feeble age;
Scarce living to be chriſten'd on the ſtage!
For humour, farce; for love, they rhime diſpenſe,
That tolls the knell for their departed ſenſe.
Dulneſs might thrive in any trade but this:
'Twould recommend to ſome fat benefice.
Dulneſs, that in a play-houſe meets diſgrace,
Might meet with rev'rence in it's proper place.

The fulſome clench that nauſeates the town
Would from a judge or alderman go down!
Such virtue is there in a robe and gown!
And that inſipid ſtuff which here you hate,
Might ſomewhere elſe be call'd a grave debate:
Dulneſs is decent in the church and ſtate.
But I forgot that ſtill 'tis underſtood,
Bad plays are beſt decry'd by ſhewing good:
Sit ſilent then, that my pleas'd ſoul may ſee
A judging audience once, and worthy me:
My faithful ſcene, from true records ſhall tell
How Trojan valour did the Greek excel;
Your great forefathers ſhall their fame regain,
And Homer's angry ghoſt repine in vain.

EPILOGUE

To TROILUS and CRESSIDA.

Spoken by Therſites.

THESE cruel criticks put me into paſſion;
For in their lowring looks I read damnation:
Ye expect a ſatyr, and I ſeldom fail,
When I'm firſt beaten, 'tis my part to rail.
You Britiſh fools of the old Trojan ſtock,
That ſtand ſo thick one cannot miſs the flock,
Poets have cauſe to dread a keeping Pit,
When womens cullies come to judge of wit.
As we ſtrew rats-bane when we vermin fear,
'Twere worth our coſt to ſcatter fools-bane here.
And after all our judging fops were ſerv'd,
Dull poets too ſhould have a doſe reſerv'd;

Such reprobates as, paſt all ſenſe of ſhaming,
Write on, and ne'er are ſatisfy'd with damning.
Next, thoſe, to whom the ſtage does not belong,
Such whoſe vocation only is to ſong;
At moſt to Prologue, when, for want of time,
Poets take in for Journey-work in rhime.
But I want curſes for thoſe mighty ſhoals
Of ſcribbling Chloriſes, and Phillis fools,
Thoſe Oaphs ſhould be reſtrain'd, during their lives,
From pen and ink, as madmen are from knives:
I could rail on, but 'twere a taſk as vain
As preaching truth at Rome, or wit in Spain;
Yet to huff out our Play was worth my trying,
John Lilburn 'ſcap'd his judges by defying:
If guilty, yet I'm ſure o'th' churches bleſſing,
By ſuffering for the plot without confeſſing.

PROLOGUE.

To *Dryden*'s SPANISH FRIAR.

NOW luck for us, and a kind hearty pit;
For he who pleaſes, never fails of wit:
Honour is yours:
And you, like kings, at city treats beſtow it;
The writer kneels, and is bid riſe a poet:
But you are fickle ſovereigns, to our ſorrow,
You dubb to-day and hang a man to-morrow;
To cry the ſame ſenſe up, and down again,
Juſt like braſs money, once a year, in Spain:
Take you i'th' mood, whate'er baſe metal come,
You coin as faſt as groats at Birmingham:
Though 'tis no more like ſenſe in antient plays,
Than Rome's religion like St. Peter's days.

In ſhort, ſo ſwift your judgments turn and wind,
You caſt our fleeteſt wits a mile behind.
'Twere well your judgments but in plays did range,
But e'en your follies and debauches change
With ſuch a whirl, the poets of our age
Are try'd, and cannot ſcore them on the ſtage,
Unleſs each vice in ſhort-hand they indite,
E'en as notcht prentices whole ſermons write.
The heavy Hollanders no vices know,
But what they us'd a hundred years ago,
Like honeſt plants, where they were ſtuck, they grow;
They cheat, but ſtill from cheating ſires they come;
They drink, but they were chriſt'ned firſt in mum.
Their patrimonial ſloth the Spaniards keep,
And Philip firſt taught Philip how to ſleep.
The French and we ſtill change, but here's the curſe,
They change for better, and we change for worſe;
They take up our old trade of conquering,
And we are taking theirs, to dance and ſing:
Our fathers did for change to France repair,
And they for change will try our Engliſh air.
As children, when they throw one toy away,
Strait a more fooliſh gewgaw comes in play:
So we, grown penitent, on ſerious thinking,
Leave whoring, and devoutly fall to drinking.
Scowring the watch grows out-of-faſhion wit,
Now we ſet up for tilting in the pit,
Where 'tis agreed by bullies, chicken-hearted,
To fright the ladies firſt, and then be parted.
A fair attempt has twice or thrice been made,
To hire night-murd'rers, and make death a trade.
When murder's out, what vice can we advance?
Unleſs the new-found pois'ning trick of France:
And when their art of Ratſbane we have got,
By way of thanks, we'll ſend them e'er our Plot.

EPILOGUE.

To the SPANISH FRIAR. By a Friend of the Author's.

THERE's none, I'm ſure, who is a friend to love,
But will our Friar's character approve:
The ableſt ſpark among you ſometimes needs,
Such pious help for charitable deeds.
Our church, alas! (as Rome objects) does want
Theſe ghoſtly comforts for the falling Saint:
This gains them their whore-converts, and may be
One reaſon of the growth of Popery.
So Mahomet's religion came in faſhion,
By the large leave it gave to fornication.
Fear not the guilt, if you can pay for't well,
There is no Dives in the Roman Hell.
Gold opens the ſtrait gate, and lets him in;
But want of money is a mortal ſin.
For all beſides you may diſcount to Heaven,
And drop a bead to keep the tallies even.
How are men cozen'd ſtill with ſhews of good!
The bawd's beſt maſk is the grave Friar's hood.
Though vice no more a clergyman diſpleaſes,
Than doctors can be thought to hate diſeaſes:
'Tis by your living ill that they live well,
By your debauches their fat paunches ſwell.
'Tis a mock-war between the Prieſt and Devil,
When they think fit, they can be very civil.
As ſome who did French counſels moſt advance,
To blind the world, have rail'd in print at France.
Thus do the clergy at your vices bawl,
That with more eaſe they may engroſs them all.

By damning yours, they do their own maintain,
A churchman's godlineſs is always gain.
Hence to their Prince they will ſuperior be;
And civil treaſon grows church-loyalty:
They boaſt the gift of Heaven is in their power;
Well may they give the God they can devour.
Still to the ſick and dead their claims they lay;
For 'tis on carrion that the vermin prey.
Nor have they leſs dominion on our life,
They trot the huſband, and they pace the wife.
Rouze up, ye cuckolds of the northern climes,
And learn from Sweden, to prevent ſuch crimes.
Unman the Friar, and leave the holy drone
To hum, in his forſaken hive, alone;
He'll work no honey when his ſting is gone.
Your wives and daughters ſoon will leave the cells,
When they have loſt the ſound of Aaron's bells.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden* and *Lee*'s DUKE of GUISE.

OUR Play's a Parallel: the Holy League
Begot our Cov'nant: Guiſards got the Whig:
Whate'er our hot-brain'd Sheriffs did advance,
Was, like our faſhions, firſt produc'd in France:
And, when worn out, well ſcourg'd, and baniſh'd there,
Sent over, like their godly beggars, here.
Could the ſame trick, twice play'd, our nation gull?
It looks as if the devil were grown dull;
Or ſerv'd us up, in ſcorn, his broken meat,
And thought we were not worth a better cheat.
The fulſome Cov'nant, one would think in reaſon,
Had giv'n us all our bellies-full of treaſon:

And yet, the name but chang'd, our naſty nation
Chews it's own excrement, th' Aſſociation.
'Tis true, we have not learn'd their pois'ning way,
For that's a mode but newly come in play;
Beſides your drug's uncertain to prevail;
But your true proteſtant can never fail
With that compendious inſtrument, a flail.
Go on; and bite, e'en though the hook lies bare;
Twice in one age expel the lawful heir:
Once more decide religion by the ſword;
And purchaſe for us a new tyrant lord.
Pray for your King; but yet your purſes ſpare;
Make him not two-pence richer by your prayer.
To ſhew you love him much, chaſtiſe him more;
And make him very great, and very poor.
Puſh him to wars, but ſtill no pence advance;
Let him loſe England, to recover France.
Cry freedom up with popular noiſy votes:
And get enough to cut each others throats.
Lop all the rights that fence your monarch's throne;
For fear of too much pow'r, pray leave him none.
A noiſe was made of arbitrary ſway;
But in revenge, you Whigs have found a way
An arbitrary duty now to pay.
Let his own ſervants turn, to ſave their ſtake;
Glean from his plenty, and his wants forſake.
But let ſome Judas near his perſon ſtay,
To ſwallow the laſt ſop, and then betray.
Make London independant of the crown:
A realm apart; the kingdom of the town.
Let ignoramus juries find no traytors,
And ignoramus poets ſcribble ſatires.
And, that your meaning none may fail to ſcan,
Do, what in coffee-houſes you began,
Pull down the maſter, and ſet up the man.

EPILOGUE

To the DUKE of GUISE.

MUCH time and trouble this poor play has coſt;
And, faith, I doubted once the cauſe was loſt.
Yet no one man was meant; nor great, nor ſmall;
Our poets, like frank gameſters, threw at all.
They took no ſingle aim:———
But, like bold boys, true to their prince and hearty,
Huzza'd, and fir'd broadſides at the whole party.
Duels are crimes; but when the cauſe is right,
In battle, every man is bound to fight.
For what ſhould hinder me to ſell my ſkin
Dear as I could, if once my hand were in?
Se defendendo never was a ſin.
'Tis a fine world, my maſters! Right or wrong,
The Whigs muſt talk, and Tories hold their tongue.
They muſt do all they can———
But We, forſooth, muſt bear a Chriſtian Mind;
And fight, like boys, with one hand ty'd behind;
Nay, and when one boy's down, 'twere wond'rous wiſe,
To cry, box fair, and give him time to riſe.
When fortune favours, none but fools will dally:
Would any of your ſparks, if *Nan* or *Molly*
Tipt you th' inviting wink, ſtand ſhall I, ſhall I?
A Trimmer cry'd (that heard me tell this ſtory),
Fie, Miſtreſs Cooke! Faith you're too rank a Tory!
Wiſh not Whigs hang'd, but pity their hard caſes;
You women love to ſee men make wry faces.
Pray, ſir, ſays I, don't think me ſuch a Jew;
I ſay no more, but give the Dev'l his due.

Lenitives, ſays he, ſuit beſt with our condition.
Jack Ketch, ſays I, 's an excellent phyſician.
I love no blood——Nor I, Sir, as I breath;
But hanging is a fine dry kind of death.
We Trimmers are for holding all things even:
Yes——juſt like him that hung 'twixt Hell and Heaven.
Have we not had mens lives enough already?
Yes ſure:——but you're for holding all things ſteady:
Now, ſince the weight hangs all on one ſide, brother,
You Trimmers ſhould, to poize it, hang on t'other.
Damn'd neuters, in their middle way of ſteering,
Are neither fiſh, nor fleſh, nor good red-herring:
Not Whigs, nor Tories they; nor this, nor that;
Not birds, nor beaſts; but juſt a kind of bat:
A twilight animal; true to neither cauſe;
With Tory wings, but Whiggiſh teeth and claws.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s Opera of ALBION and ALBANIUS.

FULL twenty years and more our lab'ring ſtage
Has loſt on this incorrigible age:
Our poets, the John Ketches of the nation,
Have ſeem'd to laſh you, e'en to excoriation:
But ſtill no ſign remains; which plainly notes,
You bore like heroes, or you brib'd like Oates.
What can we do, when mimicking a fop,
Like beating nut-trees, makes a larger crop?
Faith we'll e'en ſpare our pains; and to content you,
Will fairly leave you what your Maker meant you.
Satyr was once your phyſick, wit your food;
One nouriſh'd not, and t' other drew no blood.

We now preſcribe, like doctors in deſpair,
The diet your weak appetites can bear.
Since hearty beef and mutton will not do,
Here's julep dance, ptiſan of ſong and ſhow:
Give you ſtrong ſenſe, the liquor is too heady;
Your' re come to farce, that Aſs's Milk, already.
Some hopeful youths there are, of callow wit,
Who one day may be men, if heav'n think fit;
Sound may ſerve ſuch, e'er they to ſenſe are grown;
Like leading-ſtrings, 'till they can walk alone.
But yet to keep our friend in count'nance, know,
The wiſe Italians firſt invented ſhow;
Thence, into France the noble pageant paſt;
'Tis England's credit to be cozen'd laſt.
Freedom and zeal have chous'd you o'er and o'er;
Pray give us leave to bubble you once more;
You never were ſo cheaply fool'd before;
We bring you change to humour your diſeaſe;
Change for the worſe has ever us'd to pleaſe:
Then 'tis the mode of France; without whoſe rules,
None muſt preſume to ſet up here for fools:
In France the oldeſt man is always young,
Sees Operas daily, learns the tunes ſo long,
Till foot, hand, head, keep time with ev'ry ſong.
Each ſings his part, echoing from pit and box,
With his hoarſe voice, half harmony, half pox.
Le plus grand roi du monde, is always ringing;
They ſhow themſelves good ſubjects by their ſinging.
On that condition ſet up every throat;
You Whigs may ſing, for you have chang'd your note.
Cits and Citteſſes, raiſe a joyful ſtrain,
'Tis a good omen to begin a reign:
Voices may help your charter to reſtoring,
And get by ſinging, what you loſt by roaring.

EPILOGUE

To the Opera of ALBION and ALBANIUS.

AFTER our Æſop's Fable ſhewn to-day,
I come to give the moral of the play.
Feign'd Zeal, you ſaw, ſet out the ſpeedier pace;
But, the laſt heat, Plain-Dealing won the race:
Plain-Dealing for a jewel has been known;
But ne'er till now the jewel of a crown.
When heaven made man, to ſhew the work divine,
Truth was his image, ſtamp'd upon the coin.
And, when a King is to a God refin'd,
On all he ſays and does, he ſtamps his mind:
This proves a ſoul without alloy, and pure;
Kings, like their gold, ſhould ev'ry touch endure.
To dare in fields is valour; but how few
Dare be ſo throughly valiant to be true?
The name of great, let other kings affect:
He's great indeed, the Prince that is direct.
His ſubjects know him now, and truſt him more,
Than all their kings, and all their laws before.
What ſafety could their publick acts afford?
Thoſe he can break; but cannot break his word.
So great a truſt to Him alone was due;
Well have they truſted whom ſo well they knew.
The ſaint, who walk'd on waves, ſecurely trod,
While he believ'd the beckning of his God;
But, when his faith no longer bore him out,
Began to ſink, as he began to doubt.
Let us our native character maintain,
'Tis of our growth to be ſincerely plain.

T' excell in truth, we loyally may ſtrive;
Set privilege againſt prerogative:
He plights his faith, and We believe him juſt;
His honour is to promiſe, Ours to truſt.
Thus Britain's baſis on a word is laid,
As by a word the world itſelf was made.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s DON SEBASTIAN King of PORTUGAL.

Spoken by a Woman.

THE judge remov'd, tho' he's no more my lord,
May plead at bar, or at the council-board:
So may caſt poets write; there's no pretenſion,
To argue loſs of wit from loſs of penſion.
Your looks are chearful; and in all this place
I ſee not one, that wears a damning face.
The Britiſh nation is too brave to ſhow,
Ignoble vengeance on a vanquiſh'd foe;
At leaſt be civil to the wretch imploring;
And lay your paws upon him, without roaring:
Suppoſe our poet was your foe before,
Yet now, the bus'neſs of the field is o'er;
'Tis time to let your civil wars alone,
When troops are into winter-quarters gone.
Jove was alike to Latian and to Phrygian;
And you well know a play's of no religion.
Take good advice, and pleaſe yourſelves this day;
No matter from what hands you have the play.
Among good fellows ev'ry health will paſs,
That ſerves to carry round another glaſs:

When, with full bowls of Burgundy you dine,
Though at the mighty monarch you repine,
You grant him ſtill Moſt Chriſtian, in his wine.

Thus far the poet; but his brains grow addle;
And all the reſt is purely from this noddle.
You 've ſeen young ladies at the ſenate door,
Prefer petitions, and your grace implore;
However grave the legiſlators were,
Their cauſe went ne'er the worſe for being fair.
Reaſons as weak as theirs perhaps I bring;
But I could bribe you with as good a thing.
I heard him make advances of good nature;
That he, for once, would ſheath his cutting ſatyre:
Sign but his peace, he vows he 'll ne'er again
The ſacred names of fops and beaux profane.
Strike up the bargain quickly; for I ſwear,
As times go now, he offers very fair.
Be not too hard on him, with ſtatutes neither;
Be kind; and do not ſet your teeth together,
To ſtretch the laws, as coblers do their leather.
Horſes, by papiſts are not to be ridden;
But ſure the Muſe's Horſe was ne'er forbidden.
For in no rate-book it was ever found
That Pegaſus was valu'd at five pound:
Fine him to daily drudging and inditing;
And let him pay his taxes out in writing.

EPILOGUE

To Don Sebastian King of Portugal.

Spoken betwixt Antonio and Morayma.

Mor. I Quak'd at heart for fear the royal faſhion
Should have ſeduc'd us two to ſeparation:
To be drawn in, againſt our own deſire,
Poor I to be a nun, poor you a friar.
Ant. I trembled when the old man's hand was in,
He would have prov'd we were too near of kin:
Diſcovering old intrigues of love, like t' other,
Betwixt my father and thy ſinful mother;
To make us ſiſter Turk and Chriſtian brother.
Mor. Excuſe me there; that league ſhould have been rather
Betwixt your mother and my Mufti-father;
'Tis for my own and my relations credit
Your friends ſhould bear the baſtard, mine ſhould get it.
Ant. Suppoſe us two Almeyda and Sebaſtian
With inceſt prov'd upon us: — —
Mor. — — — — Without queſtion,
Their conſcience was two queazy of digeſtion.
Ant. Thou would'ſt have kept the council of thy brother,
And ſinn'd till we repented of each other.
Mor. Beaſt as you are, on nature's laws to trample!
'Twere fitter that we follow'd their example:
And ſince all marriage in repentance ends,
'Tis good for us to part while we are friends:
To ſave a maid's remorſes and confuſions,
E'en leave me now, before we try concluſions.

ANT. To copy their example, firſt make certain
Of one good hour like theirs before our parting;
Make a debauch o'er-night of love and madneſs,
And marry when we wake in ſober ſadneſs.

MOR. I'll follow no new ſects of your inventing,
One night might coſt me nine long months repenting:
Firſt wed, and if you find that life a fetter,
Die when you pleaſe, the ſooner, ſir, the better.
My wealth would get me love e'er I could aſk it:
Oh there's a ſtrange temptation in the caſket!
All theſe young ſharpers would my grace importune,
And make me thund'ring vows of lives and fortune.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s AMPHITRYON, or the Two SOSIAS.

THE lab'ring bee, when his ſharp ſting is gone,
Forgets his golden work, and turns a drone:
Such is a Satyre, when you take away
That rage, in which his noble vigour lay.
What gain you, by not ſuffering him to teaze ye?
He neither can offend you now, nor pleaſe ye.
The honey-bag, and venom, lay ſo near,
That both, together, you reſolv'd to tear;
And loſt your pleaſure, to ſecure your fear.
How can he ſhew his manhood, if you bind him,
To box, like boys, with one hand ty'd behind him?
This is plain leveling of wit; in which
The poor has all th' advantage, not the rich.
The blockhead ſtands excus'd for wanting ſenſe;
And wits turn blockheads in their own defence.
Yet, though the ſtage's traffick is undone,
Still Julian's interloping trade goes on:

Though ſatyre on the theatre you ſmother,
Yet in lampoons you libel one another.
The firſt produces ſtill a ſecond jig;
You whip them out, like ſchool-boys, till they gig:
And, with the ſame ſucceſs, we readers gueſs;
For ev'ry one ſtill dwindles to a leſs.
And much good malice is ſo meanly dreſt,
That we could laugh, but cannot find the jeſt.
If no advice your rhiming rage can ſtay,
Let not the ladies ſuffer in the fray.
Their tender ſex is privileg'd from war;
'Tis not like knights, to draw upon the fair.
What fame expect you from ſo mean a prize?
We wear no murd'ring weapons, but our eyes.
Our ſex, you know, was after yours deſign'd;
The laſt perfection of the Maker's mind:
Heav'n drew out all the gold for us, and left your droſs behind.
Beauty, for valour's beſt reward, he choſe;
Peace, after war; and after toil, repoſe.
Hence ye profane, excluded from our ſights;
And charm'd by day, with honour's vain delights,
Go make your beſt of ſolitary nights.
Recant betimes, 'tis prudence to ſubmit:
Our ſex is ſtill your overmatch in wit:
We never fail, with new ſucceſsful arts,
To make fine fools of you, and all your parts.

EPILOGUE

To AMPHITRYON, or the Two SOSIAS.

Spoken by Phædra.

I'M thinking, (and it almoſt makes me mad,)
How ſweet a time thoſe heathen ladies had.
Idolatry was e'en their Gods own trade;
They worſhip'd the fine creatures they had made.
Cupid was chief of all the deities;
And love was all the faſhion in the ſkies.
When the ſweet nymph held up the lily hand,
Jove was her humble ſervant at command.
The treaſury of heav'n was ne'er ſo bare,
But ſtill there was a penſion for the fair:
In all his reign adultery was no ſin;
For Jove the good example did begin.
Mark, too, when he uſurp'd the Huſband's name,
How civilly he ſav'd the lady's fame.
The ſecret joys of love He wiſely hid;
But you, Sirs, boaſt of more than e'er you did.
You teaze your cuckolds; to their face torment them;
But Jove gave his new honours to content them.
And, in the kind remembrance of the fair,
On each exalted ſon beſtow'd a ſtar.
For thoſe good deeds, as by the date appears,
His Godſhip flouriſh'd full two thouſand years.
At laſt, when he and all his prieſts grew old,
The ladies grew in their devotion cold;
And that falſe worſhip would no longer hold.
Severity of life did next begin;
(And always does, when we no more can ſin.)

That doctrine too ſo hard in practice lies,
That the next age may ſee another riſe.
Then Pagan Gods may once again ſucceed;
And Jove, or Mars, be ready at our need,
To get young godlings; and ſo mend our breed.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s CLEOMENES, the Spartan Hero.

I Think, or hope at leaſt, the coaſt is clear,
That none but men of wit and ſenſe are here:
That our bear-garden friends are all away,
Who bounce with hands and feet, and cry play, play.
Who to ſave coach-hire, trudge along the ſtreet,
Then print our matted ſeats with dirty feet;
Who, while we ſpeak, make love to orange-wenches,
And between acts ſtand ſtrutting on the benches:
Where got a cock-horſe, making vile grimaces,
They to the boxes ſhew their booby faces.
A merry-andrew ſuch a mob will ſerve,
And treat them with ſuch wit as they deſerve:
Let them go people Ireland, where there's need
Of ſuch new planters to repair the breed;
Or to Virginia, or Jamaica ſteer,
But have a care of ſome French privateer;
For if they ſhould become the prize of battle,
They'll take them black and white for Iriſh cattle.
Ariſe, True Judges, in your own defence,
Control thoſe foplings, and declare for ſenſe:
For ſhould the fools prevail, they ſtop not there,
But make their next deſcent upon the fair.
Then riſe, ye Fair! for it concerns you moſt,
That fools no longer ſhould your favours boaſt;

'Tis time you ſhould renounce them, for we find
They plead a ſenſeleſs claim to womankind:
Such ſquires are only fit for country towns,
To ſtink of ale, and duſt a ſtand with clowns:
Who, to be choſen for the land's protectors,
Tope and get drunk before their wiſe electors.
Let not farce lovers your weak choice upbraid,
But turn them over to the chamber-maid.
Or if they come to ſee our tragick ſcenes,
Inſtruct them what a Spartan Hero means:
Teach them how manly paſſions ought to move,
For ſuch as cannot think can never love:
And ſince they needs will judge the poet's art,
Point them with feſcues to each ſhining part.
Our author hopes in you, but ſtill in pain,
He fears your charms will be employ'd in vain;
You can make fools of wits, we find each hour,
But to make wits of fools, is paſt your power.

EPILOGUE

To CLEOMENES, the Spartan Hero.

THIS day, the poet, bloodily inclin'd,
Has made me die full ſore againſt my mind!
Some of you naughty men, I fear, will cry,
Poor rogue! would I might teach thee how to die!
Thanks for your love; but I ſincerely ſay,
I never meant to die your wicked way.
Well, ſince it is decreed all fleſh muſt go,
(And I am fleſh, at leaſt for ought you know,)
I firſt declare, I die with pious mind,
In perfect charity with all mankind.
Next for my will——I have in my diſpoſe,
Some certain moveables would pleaſe you beaux:

As, firſt, my Youth; for as I have been told,
Some of you modiſh ſparks, are dev'liſh old.
My Chaſtity I need not leave among ye:
For to ſuſpect old fops, were much to wrong ye.
You ſwear you're ſinners; but for all your haſte,
Your Miſſes ſhake their heads, and find you chaſte.
I give my Courage to thoſe bold commanders,
That ſtay with us, and dare not go for Flanders.
I leave my Truth, (to make his plot more clear,)
To Mr. Fuller, when he next ſhall ſwear.
I give my Judgment, craving all your mercies,
To thoſe that leave good plays, for damn'd dull farces.
My ſmall Devotion let the gallants ſhare
That come to ogle us at evening pray'r.
I give my Perſon ——— let me well conſider,
Faith e'en to him that is the faireſt bidder.
To ſome rich hunks, if any be ſo bold
To ſay thoſe dreadful words, — to Have and Hold.
But ſtay ——— to give, and be bequeathing ſtill,
When I'm ſo poor, is juſt like Wickham's will:
Like that notorious cheat, vaſt ſums I give,
Only that you may keep me while I live.
Buy a good bargain, gallants, while you may,
I'll coſt you but your half-a-crown a day.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s Opera of King ARTHUR, or the Britiſh Worthy.

SURE there's a dearth of wit in this dull town,
When ſilly plays ſo ſavourly go down:
As when clipp'd money paſſes, 'tis a ſign
A nation is not over-ſtock'd with coin.

Happy is he, who, in his own defence,
Can write juſt level to your humble ſenſe;
Who higher than your pitch can never go;
And doubtleſs, he muſt creep, who writes below.
So I have ſeen in hall of knight, or lord,
A weak arm throw on a long ſhovel-board,
He barely lays his piece, bar rubs and knocks,
Secur'd by weakneſs not to reach the box.
A feeble poet will his bus'neſs do;
Who ſtraining all he can, comes up to you:
For if you like yourſelves, you like him too.
An ape his own dear image will embrace;
An ugly beau adores a hatchet face:
So ſome of you, on pure inſtinct of nature,
Are led, by kind, t' admire your fellow creature.
In fear of which, our houſe has ſent this day,
T' inſure our new-built veſſel call'd a play.
No ſooner nam'd than one cries out, theſe ſtagers
Come in good time, to make more work for wagers.
The town divides, if it will take or no,
The courtiers bet, the cits, the merchants too:
A ſign they have but little elſe to do.
Bets, at the firſt, were fool-traps; where the wiſe,
Like ſpiders, lay in ambuſh for the flies:
But now they 're grown a common trade for all,
And actions, by the news-book, riſe and fall.
Wits, cheats, and fops, are free of wager-hall.
One policy as far as Lyons carries;
Another, nearer home ſets up for Paris.
Our bets, at laſt, would e'en to Rome extend,
But that the pope has prov'd our truſty friend.
Indeed, it were a bargain, worth our money,
Could we enſure another Ottoboni.
Among the reſt, there are a ſharping ſet,
That pray for us, and yet againſt us bet:

Sure heav'n itſelf, is at a loſs to know,
If theſe would have their pray'rs be heard or no:
For in great ſtakes we piouſly ſuppoſe,
Men pray but very faintly they may loſe.
Leave off theſe wagers; for in conſcience ſpeaking,
The city needs not your new tricks for breaking:
And if you gallants loſe, to all appearing
You 'll want an equipage for volunteering;
While thus, no ſpark of honour left within ye,
When you ſhould draw the ſword, you draw the guinea.

EPILOGUE

To the Opera of King ARTHUR, or the Britiſh Worthy.

I'VE had to-day a dozen billet-doux,
From fops, and wits, and cits, and Bow-Street beaux;
Some from Whitehall, but from the Temple more;
A Covent-Garden porter brought me four.
I have not yet read all: but, without feigning,
We maids can make ſhrewd gueſſes at your meaning.
What if, to ſhew your ſtyles, I read them here?
Methinks I here one cry, 'Oh lord, forbear:
'No, madam, no; by heav'n that 's too ſevere.'
Well then be ſafe——
But ſwear henceforwards to renounce all writing,
And take this ſolemn oath of my inditing,
'As you love eaſe, and hate campaigns and fighting.'
Yet, faith, 'tis juſt to make ſome few examples:
What if I ſhew you one or two for ſamples?
Here's one deſires my ladyſhip to meet [*Pulls one out.*
At the kind couch above, in Bridges-Street.
Oh ſharping knave! that would have, you know what,
For a poor ſneaking treat of chocolate.

Now, in the name of luck, I'll break this open,
Becauſe I dreamt laſt night I had a token; [*Pulls out another.*
The ſuperſcription is exceeding pretty,
'To the deſire of all the town and city.'
Now, gallants, you muſt know, this precious fop,
Is foreman of a haberdaſher's ſhop:
One who devoutly cheats; demure in carriage;
And courts me to the holy bands of marriage.
But with a civil inuendo too,
My overplus of love ſhall be for you.
'Madam, I ſwear your looks are ſo divine, [*reads.*
'When I ſet up, your face ſhall be my ſign:
'Though times are hard; to ſhew how I adore you,
'Here's my whole heart, and half a guinea for you.
'But have a care of beaux; they 're falſe, my honey;
'And, which is worſe, have not one rag of money.'
See how maliciouſly the rogue would wrong ye;
But I know better things of ſome among ye.
My wiſeſt way will be to keep the ſtage,
And truſt to the good nature of the age;
And he that likes the muſick and the play,
Shall be my favourite gallant to-day.

PROLOGUE

To *Dryden*'s LOVE TRIUMPHANT, or, Nature will prevail.

AS, when ſome treaſurer lays down the ſtick
Warrants are ſign'd for ready money thick;
And many deſperate debentures paid,
Which never had been, had his lordſhip ſtaid;
So now, this poet, who forſakes the ſtage,
Intends to gratify the preſent age.

One warrant ſhall be ſign'd for every man:
All ſhall be wits that will; and beaux that can:
Provided ſtill, this warrant be not ſhown,
And you be wits but to yourſelves alone.
Provided too; you rail at one another:
For there's no one wit, will allow a brother.
Provided alſo; that you ſpare this ſtory,
Damn all the plays that e'er ſhall come before ye.
If one by chance prove good in half a ſcore,
Let that one pay for all; and damn it more.
For if a good one ſcape among the crew,
And you continue judging as you do,
Every bad play will hope for damning too.
You might damn this, if it were worth your pains,
Here's nothing you will like; no fuſtian ſcenes,
And nothing too of —— you know what he means.
No double entendres, which you ſparks allow;
To make the ladies look they know not how;
Simply as 'twere; and knowing both together,
Seeming to fan their faces in cold weather.
But here's a ſtory which no books relate;
Coin'd from our own old poet's addle pate.
The fable has a moral too, if ſought:
But let that go; for, upon ſecond thought,
He fears but few come hither to be taught.
Yet if you will be profited you may;
And he would bribe you too, to like his play.
He dies, at leaſt to us, and to the ſtage,
And what he has, he leaves this noble age.
He leaves you firſt, all plays of his inditing,
The whole eſtate, which he has got by writing.
The beaux may think this nothing but vain praiſe,
They'll find it ſomething; the teſtator ſays:
For half their love, is made from ſcraps of plays.

To his worſt foes he leaves his Honeſty;
That they may thrive upon't as much as he.
He leaves his Manners to the roaring boys,
Who come in drunk, and fill the houſe with noiſe.
He leaves to the dire criticks of his wit,
His Silence, and Contempt of all they writ.
To Shakeſpear's critick, he bequeaths the curſe,
To find his faults; and yet himſelf make worſe.
A precious reader in poetick ſchools,
Who, by his own examples, damns his rules.
Laſt for the fair, he wiſhes you may be,
From your dull criticks, the Lampooners, free.
Though he pretends no legacy to leave you,
An old man may at leaſt good wiſhes give you.
Your beauty names the play; and may it prove
To each an omen of Triumphant Love!

EPILOGUE.

To Love Triumphant, or, Nature will prevail.

NOW in good manners, nothing ſhould be ſaid
Againſt this play, becauſe the poet's dead.
The Prologue told us of a moral here:
Would I could find it; but the devil knows where.
If in my part it lies, I fear he means
To warn us of the ſparks behind our ſcenes:
For if you 'll take it on Dalinda's word,
'Tis a hard chapter to refuſe a lord.
The poet might pretend this moral too,
That when a wit and fool together woo;
The damſel (not to break an antient rule,)
Should leave the wit, and take the wealthy fool.

This he might mean, but there's a truth behind,
And ſince it touches none of all our kind,
But maſks and miſſes; faith, I'll ſpeak my mind.
What, if he taught our ſex more cautious carriage;
And not to be too coming before marriage;
For fear of my misfortune in the play,
A kid brought home upon the wedding day:
I fear there are few Sanchos in the pit,
So good as to forgive, and to forget;
That will, like him, reſtore us into favour,
And take us after on our good behaviour.
Few, when they find the money-bag is rent,
Will take it for good payment on content.
But in the telling, there the difference is,
Sometimes they find it more than they could wiſh.
Therefore be warn'd, you Miſſes and you Maſks,
Look to your hits, nor give the firſt that aſks.
Tears, ſighs, and oaths, no truth of paſſion prove,
True ſettlement alone declares true love.
For him that weds a puſs, who kept her firſt,
I ſay but little, but I doubt the worſt:
The wife that was a cat may mind her houſe,
And prove an honeſt, and a careful ſpouſe;
But faith I would not truſt her with a mouſe.

PROLOGUE

Spoken before the Univerſity of OXFORD, in 1674.

Written by DRYDEN.

POETS, your ſubjects, have their parts aſſign'd
T' unbend, and to divert their ſov'reign's mind:
When, tir'd with following nature, you think fit
To ſeek repoſe in the cool ſhades of wit,

And, from the ſweet retreat, with joy ſurvey
What reſts, and what is conquer'd, of the way.
Here, free yourſelves from envy, care, and ſtrife,
You view the various turns of human life:
Safe in our ſcene, through dangerous courts you go,
And, undebauch'd, the vice of cities know.
Your theories are here to practice brought,
As in mechanick operations wrought;
And man, the little world, before you ſet,
As once the ſphere of chryſtal ſhew'd the great.
Bleſt ſure are you above all mortal kind,
If to your fortunes you can ſuit your mind:
Content to ſee, and ſhun, thoſe ills we ſhow,
And crimes on theatres alone to know.
With joy we bring what our dead authors writ,
And beg from you the value of their wit:
That Shakeſpear's, Fletcher's, and great Jonſon's claim
May be renew'd from thoſe who gave them fame.
None of our living poets dare appear;
For Muſes ſo ſevere are worſhip'd here,
That conſcious of their faults, they ſhun the eye,
And, as profane, from ſacred places fly,
Rather than ſee th' offended God, and die.
We bring no imperfections but our own;
Such faults as made are by the makers ſhown:
And you have been ſo kind, that we may boaſt,
The greateſt judges ſtill can pardon moſt.
Poets muſt ſtoop when they would pleaſe our pit,
Debas'd e'en to the level of their wit;
Diſdaining that, which yet they know will take,
Hating themſelves what their applauſe muſt make:
But when to praiſe from you they would aſpire,
Though they like eagles mount, your Jove is higher
So far your knowledge all their pow'r tranſcends,
As what *ſhould* be beyond what *is* extends.

PROLOGUE

Spoken at the opening of the New Houſe, in March, 1674.

Written by DRYDEN.

A Plain-built Houſe, after ſo long a ſtay,
Will ſend you half unſatisfy'd away;
When, fall'n from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is deſign'd.
You, who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace, ſhining all with gold,
Our mean ungilded ſtage will ſcorn, we fear,
And for the homely room, diſdain the cheer.
Yet now cheap druggets to a mode are grown,
And a plain ſuit (ſince we can make but one)
Is better than to be by tarniſh'd gawdry known.
They, who are by your favours wealthy made,
With mighty ſums may carry on the trade:
We, broken bankers, half deſtroy'd by fire,
With our ſmall ſtock to humble roofs retire:
Pity our loſs, while you their pomp admire.
For fame and honour we no longer ſtrive,
We yield in both, and only beg to live:
Unable to ſupport their vaſt expence,
Who build and treat with ſuch magnificence;
That, like th' ambitious monarchs of the age,
They give the law to our provincial ſtage.
Great neighbours enviouſly promote exceſs,
While they impoſe their ſplendor on the leſs.
But only fools, and they of vaſt eſtate,
Th' extremity of modes will imitate,
The dangling knee-fringe, and the bib-cravat.

Yet if ſome pride with want may be allow'd,
We in our plainneſs may be juſtly proud:
Our Royal Maſter will'd it ſhould be ſo;
Whate'er he's pleas'd to own, can need no ſhow:
That ſacred name gives ornament and grace,
And, like his ſtamp, makes baſeſt metals paſs.
'Twere folly now a ſtately pile to raiſe,
To build a play-houſe while you throw down plays.
While ſcenes, machines, and empty Operas reign,
And for the pencil you the pen diſdain:
While troops of famiſh'd Frenchmen hither drive,
And laugh at thoſe upon whoſe alms they live:
Old Engliſh authors vaniſh, and give place
To theſe new conqu'rors of the Norman race.
More tamely than your fathers you ſubmit;
You're now grown vaſſals to them in your wit.
Mark, when they play, how our fine fops advance
The mighty merits of their men of France,
Keep time, cry *bon*, and humour the cadence.
Well, pleaſe yourſelves; but ſure 'tis underſtood,
That French machines have ne'er done Engliſh good.
I would not propheſy our houſe's fate;
But while vain ſhews and ſcenes you over-rate,
'Tis to be fear'd — — —
That as a fire the former houſe o'erthrew,
Machines and Tempeſts will deſtroy the New.

EPILOGUE

On the ſame Occaſion.

THOUGH what our Prologue ſaid was ſadly true,
Yet, gentlemen, our homely Houſe is new,
A charm that ſeldom fails with, wicked you.
A country lip may have the velvet touch;
Though ſhe's no lady, you may think her ſuch;
A ſtrong imagination may do much.
But you, loud ſirs, who through your curls look big,
Criticks in plume and white vallancy wig,
Who lolling on our foremoſt benches ſit,
And ſtill charge firſt (the true forlorn of wit;)
Whoſe favours, like the ſun, warm where you roll,
Yet you, like him, have neither heat nor ſoul;
So may your hats your foretops never preſs,
Untouch'd your ribbons, ſacred be your dreſs;
So may you ſlowly to old age advance,
And have th' excuſe of youth for ignorance:
So may Fop-corner full of noiſe remain,
And drive far off the dull attentive train;
So may your midnight ſcow'rings happy prove,
And morning batt'ries force your way to love;
So may not France your warlike hands recall,
But leave you by each other's ſwords to fall:
As you come here to ruffle vizard punk,
When ſober, rail, and roar when you are drunk.
But to the wits we can ſome merit plead,
And urge what by themſelves has oft been ſaid:
Our Houſe relieves the ladies from the frights
Of ill-pav'd ſtreets, and long dark winter nights:

The Flanders horſes from a cold bleak road,
Where Bears in Furs dare ſcarcely look abroad;
The audience from worn plays and fuſtian ſtuff
Of rhime, more nauſeous than three boys in buff.
Though in their Houſe the Poets heads appear,
We hope we may preſume their wits are here.
The beſt which they reſerv'd they now will play;
For, like kind cuckolds, tho' w' have not the way
To pleaſe, we'll find you abler men who may.
If they ſhou'd fail, for laſt recruits we breed
A troop of friſking Monſieurs to ſucceed:
You know the French ſure cards at time of need.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Dr. *Davenant*'s CIRCE.

WERE you but half ſo wiſe as you're ſevere,
Our youthful poet ſhou'd not need to fear:
To his green years your cenſures you would ſuit,
Not blaſt the bloſſom, but expect the fruit.
The ſex, that beſt does pleaſure underſtand,
Will always chuſe to err on t'other hand.
They check not him that's aukward in delight,
But clap the young rogue's cheek, and ſet him right.
Thus hearten'd well, and fleſh'd upon his prey,
The youth may prove a man another day.
Your Ben and Fletcher, in their firſt young flight,
Did no Volpone, nor no Arbaces write;
But hopp'd about, and ſhort excurſions made
From bough to bough, as if they were afraid,
And each was guilty of ſome *ſlighted maid.*
Shakeſpeare's own muſe her Pericles firſt bore;
The prince of Tyre was elder than the Moor:

'Tis miracle to ſee a firſt good play;
All hawthorns do not bloom on Chriſtmas-day.
A ſlender poet muſt have time to grow,
And ſpread and burniſh as his brothers do.
Who ſtill looks lean, ſure with ſome pox is curſt:
But no man can be Falſtaff-fat at firſt.
Then damn not, but indulge his rude eſſays,
Encourage him, and bloat him up with praiſe,
That he may get more bulk before he dies:
He's not yet fed enough for ſacrifice.
Perhaps, if now your grace you will not grudge,
He may grow up to write, and you to judge.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

Intended to have been ſpoken by the Lady *Henr. Mar. Wentworth*, when CALISTO* was acted at court.

AS Jupiter I made my court in vain;
I'll now aſſume my native ſhape again.
I'm weary to be ſo unkindly us'd,
And would not be a god to be refus'd.
State grows uneaſy when it hinders love;
A glorious burden, which the wiſe remove.
Now as a nymph I need not ſue, nor try
The force of any light'ning but the eye.
Beauty and youth more than a god command;
No Jove could e'er the force of theſe withſtand.
'Tis here that ſov'reign power admits diſpute;
Beauty ſometimes is juſtly abſolute.
Our ſullen Catos, whatſoe'er they ſay,
Even while they frown and dictate laws, obey.

* A Maſque, by Mr. *Crown*, 1675.

You, mighty ſir, our bonds more eaſy make,
And gracefully, what all muſt ſuffer, take:
Above thoſe forms the grave affect to wear;
For 'tis not to be wiſe to be ſevere.
True wiſdom may ſome gallantry admit,
And ſoften buſineſs with the charms of wit.
Theſe peaceful triumphs with your cares you bought,
And from the midſt of fighting nations brought.
You only hear it thunder from afar,
And ſit in peace the arbiter of war:
Peace, the loath'd manna, which hot brains deſpiſe,
You knew its worth, and made it early prize:
And in its happy leiſure ſit and ſee
The promiſes of more felicity:
Two glorious nymphs of your own godlike line,
Whoſe morning rays like noontide ſtrike and ſhine;
Whom you to ſuppliant monarchs ſhall diſpoſe,
To bind your friends, and to diſarm your foes.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Sir *G. Etherege*'s MAN of MODE, 1676.

MOST modern wits ſuch monſtrous fools have ſhown,
They ſeem not of heav'n's making, but their own,
Thoſe nauſeous Harlequins in Farce may paſs;
But there goes more to a ſubſtantial aſs:
Something of man muſt be expos'd to view,
That, gallants, they may more reſemble you.
Sir Fopling is a fool ſo nicely writ,
The ladies would miſtake him for a wit;
And, when he ſings, talks loud, and cocks, wou'd cry,
I vow, methinks, he's pretty company;

So briſk, ſo gay, ſo travell'd, ſo refin'd,
As he took pains to graff upon his kind.
True fops help nature's work, and go to ſchool,
To file and finiſh God Almighty's fool.
Yet none Sir Fopling him, or him can call;
He's Knight o' th' Shire, and repreſents ye all.
From each he meets he culls whate'er he can;
Legion's his name, a people in a man.
His bulky folly gathers as it goes,
And, rolling o'er you, like a ſnow-ball grows.
His various modes from various fathers follow;
One taught the toſs, and one the new French wallow.
His ſword-knot this, his cravat that deſign'd;
And this, the yard-long ſnake he twirls behind.
From one the ſacred perriwig he gain'd,
Which wind ne'er blew, nor touch of hat prophan'd.
Another's diving bow he did adore,
Which with a ſhog caſts all the hair before,
'Till he with full *Decorum* brings it back,
And riſes with a water-ſpaniel ſhake.
As for his ſongs (the ladies dear delight)
Theſe ſure he took from moſt of you who write.
Yet ev'ry man is ſafe from what he fear'd;
For no one fool is hunted from the herd.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s MITHRIDATES King of PONTUS. 1678.

YOU'VE ſeen a pair of faithful Lovers die:
And much you care; for moſt of you will cry,
'Twas a juſt judgment on their conſtancy.
For, heav'n be thank'd, we live in ſuch an age,
When no man dies for Love, but on the Stage:

And e'en thoſe martyrs are but rare in plays;
Accurſed ſign how much true faith decays.
Love is no more a violent deſire;
'Tis a meer metaphor, a painted fire.
In all our ſex, the name examin'd well,
'Tis pride to gain, and vanity to tell.
In woman, 'tis of ſubtle int'reſt made:
Curſe on the punk that made it firſt a trade!
She firſt did wit's prerogative remove,
And made a fool preſume to prate of love.
Let honour and preferment go for gold;
But glorious beauty is not to be ſold:
Or, if it be, 'tis at a rate ſo high,
That nothing but adoring it ſhould buy.
Yet the rich cullies may their boaſting ſpare;
They purchaſe but ſophiſticated ware.
'Tis prodigality that buys deceit,
Where both the giver and the taker cheat.
Men but refine on the old half-crown way:
And women fight, like Swiſſers, for their pay.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s CÆSAR BORGIA. 1680.

TH' unhappy man who once has trail'd a pen,
Lives not to pleaſe himſelf, but other men;
Is always drudging, waſtes his life and blood,
Yet only eats and drinks what you think good.
What praiſe ſoe'er the poetry deſerve,
Yet ev'ry fool can bid the poet ſtarve.
That fumbling letcher to revenge is bent,
Becauſe he thinks himſelf or whore is meant:

Name but a Cuckold, all the City ſwarms;
From Leadenhall to Ludgate is in Arms:
Were there no fear of Antichriſt or France,
In the bleſt time poor poets live by chance.
Either you come not here, or, as you grace
Some old acquaintance, drop into the place,
Careleſs and qualmiſh with a yawning face:
You ſleep o'er wit, and by my troth you may;
Moſt of your talents lie another way.
You love to hear of ſome prodigious tale,
The bell that toll'd alone, or Iriſh Whale.
News is your food, and you enough provide,
Both for your ſelves, and all the world beſide.
One Theatre there is of vaſt reſort,
Which whilom *of Requeſts* was called *The Court*;
But now the great *Exchange of News* 'tis hight,
And full of hum and buz from noon till night.
Up ſtairs and down you run, as for a race,
And each man wears three nations in his face.
So big you look, though claret you retrench,
That, arm'd with bottled ale, you huff the French.
But all your entertainment ſtill is fed
By villains in your own dull iſland bred.
Wou'd you return to us, we dare engage
To ſhew you better rogues upon the ſtage.
You know no poiſon but plain ratſbane here;
Death's more refin'd, and better bred elſewhere.
They have a civil way in Italy,
By ſmelling a perfume to make you die;
A Trick would make you lay your ſnuff-box by.
Murder's a trade, ſo known and practis'd there,
That 'tis infallible as is the chair.
But, mark their feaſt, you ſhall behold ſuch pranks;
The Pope ſays grace, but 'tis the Dev'l gives thanks.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

To SOPHONISBA, performed at *Oxford*, 1680.

THESPIS, the firſt profeſſor of our art,
At country wakes, ſung ballads from a cart.
To prove this true, if Latin be no treſpaſs,
Dicitur et Plauſtris *vexiſſe poemata* Theſpis.
But Æſchylus, ſays Horace in ſome page,
Was the firſt mountebank that trod the ſtage:
Yet Athens never knew your learned ſport
Of toſſing poets in a Tennis-court.
But 'tis the talent of our Engliſh Nation,
Still to be plotting ſome new reformation:
And few years hence, if anarchy goes on,
Jack Preſbyter ſhall here erect his throne,
Knock out a tub with preaching once a day,
And ev'ry pray'r be longer than a play.
Then all your heathen wits ſhall go to pot,
For diſbelieving of a Popiſh-plot;
Your poets ſhall be us'd like infidels,
And worſt the author of the Oxford Belles:
Nor ſhould we 'ſcape the ſentence, to depart,
E'en in our firſt original, a cart.
No zealous brother there would want a ſtone,
To maul us Cardinals, and pelt Pope Joan:
Religion, learning, wit, would be ſuppreſt,
Rags of the whore, and trappings of the beaſt:
Scot, Suares, Tom of Aquin muſt go down,
As chief ſupporters of the triple crown;
And Ariſtotle's for deſtruction ripe;
Some ſay, he call'd the ſoul an organ-pipe,
Which, by ſome little help of derivation,
Shall then be prov'd a pipe of inſpiration.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,
To the Univerſity of OXFORD, 1681.

THE fam'd *Italian* muſe, whoſe rhymes advance
Orlando, and the Paladins of France,
Records, that, when our wit and ſenſe is flown,
'Tis lodg'd within the circle of the moon,
In earthern jars, which one, who thither ſoar'd,
Set to his noſe, ſnuff'd up, and was reſtor'd.
Whate'er the ſtory be, the moral's true;
The wit we loſt in town, we find in you.
Our poets their fled parts may draw from hence,
And fill their windy heads with ſober ſenſe.
When London votes with Southwark's diſagree,
Here may they find their long-loſt loyalty.
Here buſy ſenates to th' old cauſe inclin'd,
May ſnuff the votes their fellows left behind:
Your country neighbours, when their grain grows dear,
May come and find their *laſt proviſion* here:
Whereas we cannot much lament our loſs,
Who neither carry'd back, nor brought one croſs.
We look'd what repreſentatives would bring;
But they help'd us, juſt as they did the King.
Yet we deſpair not; for we now lay forth
The Sibyls books to thoſe who know their worth;
And tho' the firſt was ſacrific'd before,
Theſe volumes doubly will the price reſtore.
Our poet bade us hope this grace to find,
To whom by long preſcription you are kind.
He, whoſe undaunted muſe, with loyal rage,
Has never ſpar'd the vices of the age,
Here finding nothing that his ſpleen can raiſe,
Is forc'd to turn his ſatire into praiſe.

PROLOGUE to his *Royal Highneſs*,

Upon his firſt appearance at the *Duke*'s *Theatre*, after his Return from *Scotland*, 1682.

By DRYDEN.

IN thoſe cold regions which no ſummers chear,
Where brooding darkneſs covers half the year,
To hollow caves the ſhiv'ring natives go;
Bears range abroad, and hunt in tracks of ſnow:
But when the tedious twilight wears away,
And ſtars grow paler at th' approach of day,
The longing clouds to frozen mountains run;
Happy who firſt can ſee the glimm'ring ſun,
The ſurly ſavage offspring diſappear,
And curſe the bright ſucceſſor of the year.
Yet, though rough bears in covert ſeek defence,
White foxes ſtay, with ſeeming innocence:
That crafty kind with day-light can diſpenſe.
Still we are throng'd ſo full with Reynard's race,
That loyal ſubjects ſcarce can find a place:
Thus modeſt truth is caſt behind the croud:
Truth ſpeaks too low; hypocriſy too loud.
Let 'em be firſt to flatter in ſucceſs;
Duty can ſtay, but guilt has need to preſs.
Once, when true zeal the ſons of God did call,
To make their ſolemn ſhew at Heav'n's Whitehall,
The fawning Devil appear'd among the reſt,
And made as good a courtier as the beſt.
The friends of Job, who rail'd at him before,
Came cap in hand when he had three times more.
Yet late repentance may, perhaps, be true;
Kings can forgive, if rebels can but ſue:

A tyrant's power in rigour is expreſt;
The father yearns in the true Prince's breaſt.
We grant, an o'ergrown Whig no grace can mend;
But moſt are babes, that know not they offend.
The croud, to reſtleſs motion ſtill inclin'd,
Are clouds, that tack according to the wind.
Driv'n by their chiefs they ſtorms of hailſtones pour;
Then mourn, and ſoften to a ſilent ſhow'r.
O welcome to this much-offending land,
The Prince that brings forgiveneſs in his hand!
Thus angels on glad meſſages appear:
Their firſt ſalute commands us not to fear:
Thus Heav'n, that could conſtrain us to obey,
(With rev'rence if we might preſume to ſay)
Seems to relax the rights of ſov'reign ſway:
Permits to man the choice of good and ill,
And makes us happy by our own free-will.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *J. Banks's* EARL of ESSEX, 1682.

Spoken to the King and Queen at their coming to the Houſe.

WHEN firſt the Ark was landed on the ſhore,
And Heav'n had vow'd to curſe the ground no more;
When tops of hills the longing patriarch ſaw,
And the new ſcene of earth began to draw;
The dove was ſent to view the waves decreaſe,
And firſt brought back to man the pledge of peace.
'Tis needleſs to apply, when thoſe appear,
Who bring the olive, and who plant it here.

We have before our eyes the Royal Dove,
Still innocent, as harbinger to love:
The ark is open'd to diſmiſs the train,
And people, with a better race, the plain.
Tell me, ye pow'rs, why ſhould vain man purſue,
With endleſs toil, each object that is new,
And for the ſeeming ſubſtance leave the true?
Why ſhou'd he quit for hopes his certain good,
And loath the manna of his daily food?
Muſt England ſtill the ſcene of changes be,
Toſt and tempeſtuous like our ambient ſea?
Muſt ſtill our weather and our wills agree?
Without our blood our liberties we have:
Who that is free would fight to be a ſlave?
Or, what can wars to after-times aſſure,
Of which our preſent age is not ſecure?
All that our monarch would for us ordain,
Is but t' enjoy the bleſſings of his reign.
Our land's an Eden, and the main's our fence,
While we preſerve our ſtate of innocence:
That loſt, then beaſts their brutal force employ,
And firſt their lord, and then themſelves deſtroy.
What civil broils have coſt, we know too well:
Oh! let it be enough that once we fell!
And ev'ry heart conſpire, and ev'ry tongue,
Still to have ſuch a King, and this King long.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Southerne*'s LOYAL BROTHERS; or, The PERSIAN PRINCE. 1682.

POETS, like lawful Monarchs rul'd the ſtage,
Till Critics, like damn'd Whigs, debauch'd our age.
Mark how they jump: Criticks wou'd regulate
Our theatres, and Whigs reform our ſtate:
Both pretend love, and both (plague rot 'em!) hate.
The Critic humbly ſeems advice to bring;
The fawning Whig petitions to the King:
But one's advice into a ſatire ſlides;
T'other's petition a remonſtrance hides.
Theſe will no taxes give, and theſe no pence;
Critics would ſtarve the Poet, Whigs the Prince.
The Critic all our troops of friends diſcards;
Juſt ſo the Whig wou'd fain pull down the guards.
Guards are illegal, that drive foes away,
As watchful ſhepherds, that fright beaſts of prey.
Kings, who diſband ſuch needleſs aids as theſe,
Are ſafe —— as long as e'er their ſubjects pleaſe:
And that wou'd be till next Queen Beſs's night:
Which thus grave penny chroniclers indite.
Sir Edmond Bury firſt, in woful wiſe,
Leads up the ſhow, and milks their maudlin eyes.
There's not a butcher's wife but dribs her part,
And pities the poor pageant from her heart;
Who, to provoke revenge, rides round the fire,
And, with a civil congé, does retire.
But guiltleſs blood to ground muſt never fall;
There's Antichriſt behind, to pay for all.

The punk of Babylon in pomp appears,
A lewd old gentleman of ſeventy years:
Whoſe age in vain our mercy would implore;
For few take pity on an old caſt whore.
The Devil, who brought him to the ſhame, takes part;
Sits cheek by jowl, in black, to cheer his heart;
Like thief and parſon in a Tyburn-cart.
The word is giv'n, and with a loud huzza
The mitred puppet from his chair they draw:
On the ſlain corps contending nations fall:
Alas! what's one poor Pope among them all!
He burns; now all true hearts your triumphs ring;
And next (for faſhion) cry, *God ſave the King*.
A needful cry in midſt of ſuch alarms,
When forty thouſand men are up in arms.
But after he's once ſav'd, to make amends,
In each ſucceeding health they damn his friends:
So God begins, but ſtill the Devil ends.
What if ſome one, inſpir'd with zeal, ſhou'd call,
Come, let's go cry, God ſave him at Whitehall?
His beſt friends wou'd not like this over-care,
Or think him ere the ſafer for this pray'r.
Five praying ſaints are by an act allow'd;
But not the whole Church-militant in croud.
Yet, ſhou'd heav'n all the true petitions drain
Of Preſbyterians, who wou'd Kings maintain,
Of forty thouſand, five wou'd ſcarce remain.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the ſame.

A Virgin poet was ſerv'd up to-day,
Who, till this hour, ne'er cackled for a play.
He's neither yet a Whig nor Tory-boy;
But, like a girl, whom ſev'ral wou'd enjoy,
Begs leave to make the beſt of his own nat'ral Toy.
Were I to play my callow author's game,
The King's Houſe would inſtruct me by the name.
There's loyalty to one: I wiſh no more:
A commonwealth ſounds like a common whore.
Let huſband or gallant be what they will,
One part of woman is true Tory ſtill.
If any factious ſpirit ſhould rebel,
Our ſex, with eaſe, can ev'ry riſing quell.
Then, as you hope we ſhould your failings hide,
An honeſt jury for our play provide.
Whigs at their poets never take offence;
They ſave dull culprits, who have murder'd ſenſe.
Tho' nonſenſe is a nauſeous heavy maſs,
The vehicle call'd faction makes it paſs.
Faction in play's the commonwealth-man's bribe;
The leaden farthing of the canting tribe:
Tho' void in payment laws and ſtatutes make it,
The neighbourhood, that knows the man, will take it.
'Tis faction buys the votes of half the pit;
Their's is the penſion-parliament of wit.
In city-clubs their venom let them vent;
For there 'tis ſafe, in its own element.
Here, where their madneſs can have no pretence,
Let them forget themſelves an hour of ſenſe.

In one poor iſle, why ſhou'd two factions be?
Small diff'rence in your vices I can ſee:
In drink and drabs both ſides too well agree.
Wou'd there were more preferments in the land:
If places fell, the party could not ſtand.
Of this damn'd grievance ev'ry Whig complains;
They grunt like hogs, 'till they have got their grains.
Mean time you ſee what trade our plots advance;
We ſend each year good money into France;
And they that know what merchandiſe we need,
Send o'er true Proteſtants to mend our breed.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s CONSTANTINE the GREAT. 1684.

OUR hero's happy in the play's concluſion;
The holy rogue at laſt has met confuſion:
Tho' Arrius all along appear'd a ſaint,
The laſt act ſhew'd him a true Proteſtant.
Euſebius (for you know I read Greek authors)
Reports, that, after all theſe plots and ſlaughters,
The court of Conſtantine was full of glory,
And every Trimmer turn'd addreſſing Tory.
They follow'd him in herds as they were mad:
When Clauſe was King, then all the world was glad.
Whigs kept the places they poſſeſt before,
And moſt were in a way of getting more;
Which was as much as ſaying, Gentlemen,
Here's power and money to be rogues again.
Indeed, there were a ſort of peaking tools,
Some call them modeſt, but I call them fools,
Men much more loyal, tho' not half ſo loud;
But theſe poor Devils were caſt behind the croud.

For bold knaves thrive without one grain of ſenſe,
But good men ſtarve for want of impudence.
Beſides all theſe, there were a ſort of wights,
(I think my author calls them Tekelites)
Such hearty rogues againſt the King and laws,
They favour'd e'en a foreign rebel's cauſe.
When their own damn'd deſign was quaſh'd and aw'd,
At leaſt, they gave it their good word abroad.
As many a man, who, for a quiet life,
Breeds out his baſtard, not to noiſe his wife;
Thus o'er their darling plot theſe Trimmers cry;
And tho' they cannot keep it in their eye,
They bind it prentice to Count Tekely.
They b'lieve not the laſt plot; may I be curſt,
If I believe they e'er believ'd the firſt.
No wonder their own plot no plot they think:
The man, that makes it, never ſmells the ſtink.
And now it comes into my head, I'll tell
Why theſe damn'd Trimmers lov'd the Turks ſo well.
Th' orig'nal Trimmer, though a friend to no man,
Yet in his heart ador'd a pretty woman;
He knew that Mahomet laid up for ever
Kind black-ey'd rogues, for ev'ry true believer;
And, which was more than mortal man e'er taſted,
One pleaſure that for threeſcore twelvemonths laſted:
To turn for this, may ſurely be forgiven:
Who'd not be circumcis'd for ſuch a Heav'n?

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Southerne*'s DISAPPOINTMENT; or, the MOTHER in FASHION. 1684.

Spoken by Mr. *Betterton*.

HOW comes it, gentlemen, that now a-days,
When all of you ſo ſhrewdly judge of plays,
Our poets tax you ſtill with want of ſenſe?
All prologues treat you at your own expence.
Sharp citizens a wiſer way can go;
They make you fools, but never call you ſo.
They, in good manners, ſeldom make a ſlip,
But treat a common whore with ladyſhip:
But here each ſaucy wit at random writes,
And uſes ladies as he uſes knights.
Our author, young and grateful in his nature,
Vows, that from him no nymph deſerves a ſatire:
Nor will he ever draw—I mean his rhime,
Againſt the ſweet partaker of his crime.
Nor is he yet ſo bold an undertaker,
To call men fools; 'tis railing at their Maker.
Beſides, he fears to ſplit upon that ſhelf:
He's young enough to be a fop himſelf:
And, if his praiſe can bring you all a-bed,
He ſwears ſuch hopeful youth no nation ever bred.
Your nurſes, we preſume, in ſuch a caſe,
Your father choſe, becauſe he lik'd the face;
And, often, they ſupply'd your mother's place.
The dry nurſe was your mother's ancient maid,
Who knew ſome former ſlip ſhe ne'er betray'd.

Betwixt 'em both, for milk and ſugar-candy,
Your ſucking bottles were well ſtor'd with brandy.
Your father, to initiate your diſcourſe,
Meant to have taught you firſt to ſwear and curſe;
But was prevented by each careful nurſe.
For, leaving dad and mam, as names too common,
They taught you certain parts of man and woman.
I paſs your ſchools; for there when firſt you came,
You wou'd be ſure to learn the Latin name.
In colleges you ſcorn'd the art of thinking,
But learn'd all moods and figures of good drinking:
Thence come to town, you practiſe play, to know
The virtues of the high dice, and the low.
Each thinks himſelf a ſharper moſt profound:
He cheats by pence; is cheated by the pound.
With theſe perfections, and what elſe he gleans,
The ſpark ſets up for love behind our ſcenes;
Hot in purſuit of Princeſſes and Queens.
There, if they know their man, with cunning carriage,
Twenty to one but it concludes in marriage.
He hires ſome homely room, love's fruits to gather,
And garret-high rebels againſt his father:
But he once dead ———
Brings her in triumph, with her portion down,
A toilet, dreſſing-box, and half a crown.
Some marry firſt, and then they fall to ſcowring,
Which is, refining marriage into whoring,
Our women batten well on their good-nature;
All they can rap and rend for the dear creature.
But while abroad ſo liberal the dolt is,
Poor ſpouſe at home as ragged as a colt is.
Laſt, ſome there are, who take their firſt degrees
Of lewdneſs in our middle galleries.

The doughty bullies enter bloody drunk,
Invade and grabble one another's punk:
They caterwaul, and make a diſmal rout,
Call ſons of whores, and ſtrike, but ne'er lug out:
Thus while for paultry punk they roar and ſtickle,
They make it bawdier than a conventicle.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the King and Queen, upon the union of the two Companies in 1686.

SINCE faction ebbs, and rogues grow out of faſhion,
Their penny-ſcribes take care t'inform the nation,
How well men thrive in this or that plantation:

How Penſylvania's air agrees with Quakers,
And Carolina's with Aſſociators:
Both e'en too good for Madmen and for Traitors.

Truth is, our land with ſaints is ſo run o'er,
And every age produces ſuch a ſtore,
That now there's need of two New-Englands more.

What's this, you'll ſay, to us and our vocation?
Only thus much, that we have left our Station,
And made this Theatre our new Plantation.

The factious natives never cou'd agree;
But aiming, as they call'd it, to be free,
Thoſe play-houſe Whigs ſet up for property.

Some ſay, they no obedience paid of late;
But would new fears and jealouſies create;
'Till topſy-turvy they had turn'd the ſtate.

Plain ſenſe, without the talent of foretelling,
Might gueſs 'twould end in downright knocks and quelling:
For ſeldom comes there better of rebelling.

When men will, needleſsly, their freedom barter
For lawleſs pow'r, ſometimes they catch a tartar:
There's a damn'd word that rhimes to this, call'd charter.

But, ſince the victory with us remains,
You ſhall be call'd to twelve in all our gains;
If you'll not think us ſaucy for our pains.

Old men ſhall have good old plays to delight 'em:
And you, fair ladies and gallants that ſlight 'em,
We'll treat with good new plays; if our new wits can write 'em.

We'll take no blund'ring verſe, no fuſtian tumour,
No dribling love, from this or that perfumer:
No dull fat fool ſhamm'd on the ſtage for humour.

For, faith, ſome of 'em ſuch vile ſtuff have made,
As none but fools or fairies ever play'd;
But 'twas, as ſhop-men ſay, to force a trade.

We've giv'n you Tragedies, all ſenſe defying,
And ſinging men, in woful metre dying;
This 'tis when heavy lubbers will be flying.

All theſe diſaſters we well hope to weather;
We bring you none of our old lumber hither:
Whig Poets and Whig Sheriffs may hang together.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

On the ſame occaſion.

NEW miniſters, when firſt they get in place,
Muſt have a care to pleaſe; and that's our caſe:
Some laws for publick welfare we deſign,
If you, the power ſupreme, will pleaſe to join:
There are a ſort of prattlers in the pit,
Who either have, or who pretend to wit:
Theſe noiſy ſirs ſo loud their parts rehearſe,
That oft the Play is ſilenced by the Farce.
Let ſuch be dumb, this penalty to ſhun,
Each to be thought my lady's eldeſt ſon.
But ſtay: methinks ſome Vizard Maſk I ſee,
Caſt out her lure from the mid gallery:
About her all the flutt'ring ſparks are rang'd;
The noiſe continues though the ſcene is chang'd:
Now growling, ſputt'ring, wauling, ſuch a clutter,
'Tis juſt like puſs defendant in a gutter:
Fine love no doubt; but ere two days are o'er ye,
The ſurgeon will be told a woful ſtory.
Let Vizard Maſk her naked face expoſe,
On pain of being thought to want a noſe:
Then for your lacqueys, and your train beſide,
(By what-e'er name or title dignify'd)
They roar ſo loud, you'd think behind the ſtairs
Tom Dove, and all the brotherhood of bears:
They're grown a nuſance, beyond all diſaſters;
We've none ſo great but their unpaying maſters.
We beg you, ſirs, to beg your men, that they
Wou'd pleaſe to give you leave to hear the play.

Next in the Play-houſe ſpare your precious lives;
Think, like good Chriſtians, on your bearns and wives:
Think on your ſouls; but by your lugging forth,
It ſeems you know how little they are worth.
If none of theſe will move the warlike mind,
Think on the helpleſs whore you leave behind.
We beg you, laſt, our ſcene-room to forbear,
And leave our goods and chattels to our care.
Alas! our women are but waſhy toys,
And wholly taken up in ſtage employs:
Poor willing tits they are: but yet I doubt
This double duty ſoon will wear 'em out.
Then you are watch'd beſides with jealous care;
What if my lady's page ſhould find you there?
My lady knows t' a tittle what there's in ye;
No paſſing your gilt ſhilling for a guinea.
Thus, gentlemen, we have ſumm'd up in ſhort
Our grievances, from Country, Town, and Court:
Which humbly we ſubmit to your good pleaſure;
But firſt vote money, then redreſs at leiſure.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s PRINCESS of CLEVES. 1689.

LADIES! (I hope there's none behind to hear)
I long to whiſper ſomething in your ear:
A ſecret, which does much my mind perplex:
There's treaſon in the play againſt our ſex.
A man's that's falſe to love, that vows and cheats,
And kiſſes every living thing he meets.
A rogue in mode (I dare not ſpeak too broad)
One that does ſomething to the very bawd.

Out on him, traytor, for a filthy beaſt;
Nay, and he's like the pack of all the reſt:
None of 'em ſtick at mark; they all deceive.
Some Jew has chang'd the text, I half believe;
There Adam cozen'd our poor grandame Eve.
To hide their faults they rap out oaths, and tear:
Now, tho' we lye, we're too well-bred to ſwear.
So we compound for half the ſin we owe,
But men are dipt for ſoul and body too;
And, when found out, excuſe themſelves, pox cant 'em,
With Latin ſtuff, *perjuria ridet Amantum.*
I'm not book-learn'd, to know that word in vogue;
But I ſuſpect 'tis Latin for a rogue.
I'm ſure, I never heard that ſkreech-owl hollow'd
In my poor ears, but ſeparation follow'd.
How can ſuch perjur'd villains e'er be ſav'd?
Achitophel's not half ſo falſe to David.
With vows and ſoft expreſſions to allure,
They ſtand, like foremen of a ſhop, demure:
No ſooner out of ſight, but they are gadding,
And for the next new face ride out a padding.
Yet, by their favour, when they have been kiſſing,
We can perceive the ready money miſſing.
Well! we may rail; but 'tis as good e'en wink;
Something we find, and ſomething they will ſink.
But, ſince they're at renouncing, 'tis our parts,
To trump their diamonds, as they trump our hearts.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the ſame.

A Qualm of Conſcience brings me back again,
To make amends to you beſpatter'd men.
We women love like cats, that hide their joys,
By growling, ſqualling, and a hideous noiſe.
I rail'd at wild young ſparks; but, without lying,
Never was man worſe thought on for high-flying.
The prodigal of love gives each her part,
And ſquandring ſhows, at leaſt a noble heart.
I've heard of men, who, in ſome lewd lampoon,
Have hir'd a friend, to make their valour known.
That accuſation ſtraight this queſtion brings;
What is the man that does ſuch naughty things?
The ſpaniel lover, like a ſneaking fop,
Lies at our feet: He's ſcarce worth taking up.
'Tis true, ſuch heroes in a play go far;
But chamber practice is not like the bar.
When men ſuch vile, ſuch feint, petitions make,
We fear to give, becauſe they fear to take;
Since modeſty's the virtue of our kind,
Pray let it be to our own ſex confin'd.
When men uſurp it from the female nation,
'Tis but a work of ſupererogation——
We ſhew'd a princeſs in the play, 'tis true,
Who gave her Cæſar more than all his due;
Told her own faults: but I ſhou'd much abhor
To chuſe a huſband for my confeſſor.
You ſee what fate follow'd the ſaint-like fool,
For telling tales from out the nuptial ſchool.

Our play a merry comedy had prov'd,
Had ſhe confeſs'd ſo much to him ſhe lov'd.
True Preſbyterian wives the *means* wou'd try;
But damn'd confeſſing is flat popery.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mrs. *Behn*'s WIDOW RANTER. 1690.

HEAV'N ſave ye, gallants, and this hopeful age;
Y'are welcome to the downfall of the ſtage:
The fools have labour'd long in their vocation;
And vice (the manufacture of the nation)
O'erſtocks the town ſo much, and thrives ſo well,
That fops and knaves grow drugs, and will not ſell.
In vain our wares on theatres are ſhown,
When each has a plantation of his own.
His cauſe ne'er fails; for whatſoe'er he ſpends,
There's ſtill God's plenty for himſelf and friends.
Shou'd men be rated by poetic rules,
Lord! what a poll would there be rais'd from fools!
Mean time poor wit prohibited muſt lie,
As if 'twere made ſome French commodity.
Fools you will have, and rais'd at vaſt expence;
And yet, as ſoon as ſeen, they give offence.
Time was, when none wou'd cry, that oaf was me;
But now you ſtrive about your pedigree.
Bauble and cap no ſooner are thrown down,
But there's a muſs of more than half the town.
Each one will challenge a child's part at leaſt;
A ſign the family is well increaſt.
Of foreign cattle there's no longer need,
When we're ſupply'd ſo faſt with Engliſh breed.

Well! flouriſh, countrymen, drink, ſwear, and roar;
Let ev'ry free-born ſubject keep his whore,
And wand'ring in the wilderneſs about,
At end of forty years not wear her out.
But when you ſee theſe pictures, let none dare
To own beyond a limb or ſingle ſhare:
For where the punk is common, he's a ſot,
Who needs will father what the pariſh got.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Mountfort*'s HENRY II. 1693.

Spoken by Mrs. *Bracegirdle*.

THUS you the ſad cataſtrophe have ſeen,
Occaſion'd by a Miſtreſs and a Queen.
Queen Eleanor the proud was French, they ſay;
But Engliſh manufacture got the day.
Jane Clifford was her name, as books aver:
Fair Roſamond was but her *Nom de guerre*.
Now tell me, gallants, wou'd you lead your life
With ſuch a Miſtreſs, or with ſuch a Wife?
If one muſt be your choice, which d'ye approve,
The curtain lecture, or the curtain love?
Wou'd ye be godly with perpetual ſtrife,
Still drudging on with homely Joan your wife;
Or take your pleaſure in a wicked way,
Like honeſt whoring Harry in the play?
I gueſs your minds: The miſtreſs wou'd be taken,
And nauſeous matrimony ſent a packing.
The devil's in you all; mankind's a rogue;
You love the bride, but you deteſt the clog.

After a year, poor ſpouſe is left i' th' lurch,
And you, like Haynes, return to Mother-Church,
Or, if the name of Church comes croſs your mind,
Chapels of eaſe behind our ſcenes you find.
The Play-houſe is a kind of Market-place;
One chaffers for a voice, another for a face:
Nay, ſome of you (I dare not ſay how many)
Wou'd buy of me a pen'worth for your penny.
E'en this poor face (which with my fan I hide)
Wou'd make a ſhift my portion to provide,
With ſome ſmall perquiſites I have beſide.
Tho' for your love, perhaps, I ſhou'd not care,
I could not hate a man that bids me fair.
What might enſue, 'tis hard for me to tell;
But I was drench'd to day for loving well,
And fear the poiſon that wou'd make me ſwell.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

IF there be yet a few that take delight
In that which reaſonable men ſhould write;
To them alone we dedicate this night.
The reſt may ſatisfy their curious itch
With City Gazettes, or ſome factious ſpeech,
Or what-e'er libel, for the publick Good,
Stirs up the Shrove-tide crew to fire and blood.
Remove your benches, you apoſtate pit,
And take above, twelve pennyworth of wit;
Go back to your dear dancing on the rope,
Or ſee what's worſe, the Devil and the Pope.
The plays that take on our corrupted ſtage,
Methinks, reſemble the diſtracted age;

Noiſe, madneſs, all unreaſonable things,
That ſtrike at ſenſe, as rebels do at kings.
The ſtyle of Forty-one our poets write,
And you are grown to judge like Forty-eight.
Such cenſures our miſtaking audienee make,
That 'tis almoſt grown ſcandalous to take.
They talk of fevers that infect the brains;
But nonſenſe is the new diſeaſe that reigns.
Weak ſtomachs with a long diſeaſe oppreſt,
Cannot the cordials of ſtrong wit digeſt.
Therefore thin nouriſhment of Farce ye chuſe,
Decoctions of a barley-water muſe:
A meal of Tragedy would make ye ſick,
Unleſs it were a very tender chick.
Some ſcenes in ſippets wou'd be worth our time;
Thoſe would go down; ſome love that's poach'd in rhime;
If theſe ſhould fail———
We muſt lie down, and, after all our coſt,
Keep holy-day, like watermen in froſt;
While you turn players on the world's great ſtage,
And act yourſelves the farce of your own age.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

To Mr. *Saunders's* TAMERLANE.

LADIES, the beardleſs Author of this day,
Commends to you the fortune of his Play.
A Woman Wit has often grac'd the ſtage;
But he's the firſt Boy-Poet of our age.
Early as is the year his fancies blow,
Like young Narciſſus peeping thro' the ſnow.

Thus Cowley bloſſom'd ſoon, yet flouriſh'd long:
This is as forward, and may prove as ſtrong.
Youth with the Fair ſhould always favour find,
Or we are damn'd diſſemblers of our kind.
What's all this love they put into our parts?
'Tis but the pit-a-pat of two young hearts.
Should Hag and Gray-beard make ſuch tender moan,
Faith, you'd e'en truſt 'em to themſelves alone,
And cry, let's go, here's nothing to be done.
Since love's our buſineſs, as 'tis your delight,
The Young, who beſt can practiſe, beſt can write.
What though he be not come to his full pow'r,
He's mending and improving every hour.
You ſly She-jockies of the box and pit,
Are pleas'd to find a hot unbroken Wit;
By management he may in time be made,
But there's no hope of an old batter'd jade;
Faint and unnerv'd he runs into a ſweat,
And always fails you at the ſecond heat.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN.

YOU ſaw our Wife was chaſte, yet throughly try'd,
And, without doubt, y'are hugely edify'd;
For, like our Hero, whom we ſhew'd to-day,
You think no woman true, but in a Play.
Love once did make a pretty kind of ſhow;
Eſteem and kindneſs in one breaſt would grow:
But 'twas heav'n knows how many years ago.
Now ſome ſmall chat, and guinea expectation,
Gets all the pretty creatures in the nation:
In Comedy your little ſelves you meet;
'Tis Covent-garden drawn in Bridges-ſtreet.

Smile on our Author then, if he has ſhown
A jolly nut-brown baſtard of your own.
Ah! happy you, with eaſe and with delight,
Who act thoſe follies, poets toil to write!
The ſweating muſe does almoſt leave the chace;
She puffs, and hardly keeps your Protean vices pace.
Pinch you but in one vice, away you fly
To ſome new friſk of contrariety.
You roll like ſnow balls, gathering as you run,
And get ſeven Dev'ls, when diſpoſſeſs'd of one.
Your Venus once was a Platonick Queen;
Nothing of love beſide the face was ſeen;
But every inch of her you now uncaſe,
And clap a vizard-maſk upon the face.
For ſins like theſe, the zealous of the land,
With little hair, and little or no band,
Declare how circulating peſtilences
Watch, every twenty years, to ſnap offences.
Saturn, e'en now, takes doctoral degrees;
He'll do your work this ſummer, without fees.
Let all the Boxes, Phœbus, find thy grace,
And, ah, preſerve the Eighteen-penny Place!
But for the Pit Confounders, let 'em go,
And find as little mercy as they ſhow:
The Actors thus, and thus thy Poets pray;
For ev'ry Critick ſav'd, thou damn'ſt a Play.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*'s PROPHETESS. Revived by Mr. *Dryden*.

Spoken by Mr. *Betterton*.

WHAT Noſtradame, with all his art can gueſs,
The fate of our approaching Propheteſs?
A Play, which, like a perſpective ſet right,
Preſents our vaſt expences cloſe to ſight;
But turn the tube, and there we ſadly view
Our diſtant gains; and thoſe uncertain too:
A ſweeping tax, which on ourſelves we raiſe,
And all, like you, in hopes of better days.
When will our loſſes warn us to be wiſe?
Our wealth decreaſes, and our charges riſe.
Money, the ſweet allurer of our hopes,
Ebbs out in oceans, and comes in by drops.
We raiſe new objects to provoke delight;
But you grow ſated, ere the ſecond ſight.
Falſe men, e'en ſo you ſerve your miſtreſſes:
They riſe three ſtories in their tow'ring dreſs;
And, after all, you love not long enough
To pay the rigging, ere you leave 'em off.
Never content with what you had before,
But true to change, and Engliſh men all o'er.
Now honour calls you hence; and all your care
Is to provide the horrid pomp of war.
In plume and ſcarf, jack-boots, and Bilbo blade,
Your ſilver goes, that ſhou'd ſupport our trade.
Go, unkind heroes, leave our ſtage to mourn;
'Till rich from vanquiſh'd rebels you return;

And the fat ſpoils of Teague in triumph draw,
His Firkin-butter, and his Uſquebaugh.
Go, conqu'rors of your male and female foes;
Men without hearts, and women without hoſe.
Each bring his love a Bogland captive home;
Such proper pages will long trains become;
With copper collars, and with brawny backs,
Quite to put down the faſhion of our Blacks.
Then ſhall the pious Muſes pay their vows,
And furniſh all their laurels for your brows;
Their tuneful voice ſhall raiſe for your delights;
We want not Poets fit to ſing your fights.
But you, bright Beauties, for whoſe only ſake
Thoſe doughty Knights ſuch dangers undertake,
When they with happy gales are gone away,
With your propitious preſence grace our Play;
And with a ſigh their empty ſeats ſurvey:
Then think, on that bare bench my ſervant ſat;
I ſee him ogle ſtill, and hear him chat;
Selling facetious bargains, and propounding
That witty recreation, call'd dum-founding.
Their loſs with patience we will try to bear;
And wou'd do more, to ſee you often here:
That our dead Stage, reviv'd by your fair eyes,
Under a Female Regency may riſe.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the Univerſity of OXFORD.

Spoken by Mr. *Hart*, at the acting of the *Silent Woman*.

WHAT Greece, when learning flouriſh'd, only knew,
Athenian Judges, you this day renew.
Here too are annual Rites to Pallas done,
And here Poetick Prizes loſt or won.
Methinks I ſee you, crown'd with olives, ſit,
And ſtrike a ſacred horror from the pit.
A Day of Doom is this of your decree,
Where even the beſt are but by mercy free:
A Day, which none but Johnſon durſt have wiſh'd to ſee.
Here they, who long have known the uſeful ſtage,
Come to be taught themſelves to teach the age.
As your Commiſſioners our Poets go,
To cultivate the virtue which you ſow;
In your Lycæum firſt themſelves refin'd,
And delegated thence to human-kind.
But as Ambaſſadors, when long from home,
For new inſtructions to their princes come,
So Poets, who your precepts have forgot,
Return, and beg they may be better taught:
Follies and faults elſewhere by them are ſhown,
But by your manners they correct their own.
Th' illiterate Writer, emperick like, applies
To minds diſeas'd, unſafe, chance, remedies:
The Learn'd in Schools, where knowledge firſt began,
Studies with care th' anatomy of man;
Sees virtue, vice, and paſſions in their cauſe,
And fame from ſcience, not from fortune, draws.

So Poetry, which is in Oxford made
An Art, in London only is a Trade.
There haughty dunces, whoſe unlearned pen
Cou'd ne'er ſpell grammar, would be reading men.
Such build their poems the Lucretian way;
So many huddled atoms make a Play;
And if they hit in order by ſome chance,
They call that nature, which is ignorance.
To ſuch a fame let mere Town-Wits aſpire,
And their gay nonſenſe their own Cits admire.
Our Poet, could he find forgiveneſs here,
Would wiſh it rather than a plaudit there.
He owns no crown from thoſe Prætorian bands,
But knows that Right is in the Senate's hands.
Not impudent enough to hope your praiſe,
Low at the Muſes feet his wreath he lays,
And, where he took it up, reſigns his bays.
Kings make their Poets whom themſelves think fit,
But 'tis your ſuffrage makes authentick Wit.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

Spoken by the ſame.

NO poor Dutch peaſant, wing'd with all his fear,
Flies with more haſte, when the French arms draw near,
Than we with our Poetick Train come down,
For refuge hither, from th' infected Town:
Heav'n for our ſins this ſummer has thought fit
To viſit us with all the Plagues of Wit.
A French Troop firſt ſwept all things in its way;
But thoſe hot Monſieurs were too quick to ſtay:

Yet, to our coſt, in that ſhort time, we find
They left their Itch of Novelty behind.
Th' Italian Merry-Andrews took their place,
And quite debauch'd the Stage with lewd grimace;
Inſtead of Wit and Humour, your delight
Was there to ſee two Hobby-horſes fight;
Stout *Scaramoucha* with Ruſh Lance rode in,
And ran a tilt at Centaur *Arlequin*.
For love you heard how amorous Aſſes bray'd,
And Cats in gutters gave their ſerenade.
Nature was out of count'nance, and each day
Some new-born monſter ſhewn you for a Play.
But when all fail'd, to ſtrike the Stage quite dumb,
Thoſe wicked engines call'd Machines are come.
Thunder and Lightning now for Wit are play'd,
And ſhortly ſcenes in Lapland will be laid:
Art Magick is for Poetry profeſt;
And Cats and Dogs, and each obſcener beaſt,
To which Ægyptian dotards once did bow,
Upon our Engliſh Stage are worſhipp'd now.
Witchcraft reigns there, and raiſes to renown
Macbeth, and Simon Magus of the Town.
Fletcher's deſpis'd, your Johnſon's out of faſhion,
And Wit the only drug in all the nation.
In this low ebb our wares to you are ſhown;
By you thoſe ſtaple Authors worth is known;
For Wit's a manufacture of your own.
When you, who only can, their ſcenes have prais'd,
We'll boldly back, and ſay, their price is rais'd.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

Spoken at OXFORD by Mrs. *Marſhall.*

OFT has our Poet wiſh'd, this happy ſeat
Might prove his fading Muſe's laſt retreat:
I wonder'd at his wiſh, but now I find
He ſought for quiet, and content of mind;
Which noiſeful Towns, and Courts can never know,
And only in the ſhades like laurels grow.
Youth, ere it ſees the world, here ſtudies reſt,
And age returning thence concludes it beſt.
What wonder if we court that happineſs
Yearly to ſhare, which hourly you poſſeſs,
Teaching e'en you, while the vext world we ſhow,
Your peace to value more, and better know?
'Tis all we can return for favours paſt,
Whoſe holy memory ſhall ever laſt,
For patronage from him whoſe care preſides
O'er ev'ry noble art, and ev'ry ſcience guides:
Bathurſt, a name the learn'd with reverence know,
And ſcarcely more to his own Virgil owe;
Whoſe age enjoys but what his youth deſerv'd,
To rule thoſe Muſes whom before he ſerv'd.
His learning, and untainted manners too,
We find, Athenians, are deriv'd to you:
Such antient hoſpitality there reſts
In yours, as dwelt in the firſt Grecian breaſts,
Whoſe kindneſs was religion to their gueſts.
Such modeſty did to our ſex appear,
As, had there been no laws, we need not fear,
Since each of you was our protector here.

Converſe ſo chaſte, and ſo ſtrict virtue ſhown,
As might Apollo with the Muſes own.
Till our return, we muſt deſpair to find
Judges ſo juſt, ſo knowing, and ſo kind.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the Univerſity of OXFORD.

DISCORD, and plots, which have undone our age,
With the ſame ruin have o'erwhelm'd the Stage.
Our Houſe has ſuffer'd in the common woe,
We have been troubled with Scotch rebels too.
Our brethren are from Thames to Tweed departed,
And of our ſiſters, all the kinder-hearted,
To Edinborough gone, or coach'd, or carted.
With Bonny Blewcap there they act all night
For Scotch half crown, in Engliſh, three-pence hight.
One nymph, to whom fat Sir John Falſtaff's lean,
There with her ſingle perſon fills the ſcene.
Another, with long uſe and age decayed,
Div'd here old Woman, and roſe there a Maid.
Our truſty door-keepers of former time
There ſtrut and ſwagger in heroick rhime.
Tack but a copper-lace to drugget ſuit,
And there's a hero made without diſpute:
And that, which was a capon's tail before,
Becomes a plume for Indian emperor.
But all his ſubjects, to expreſs the care
Of imitation, go, like Indians bare:
Lac'd linen there would be a dangerous thing;
It might perhaps a new rebellion bring;
The Scot, who wore it, wou'd be choſen King.

But why ſhould I theſe Renegades deſcribe,
When you yourſelves have ſeen a lewder tribe?
Teague has been here, and, to this learned Pit,
With Iriſh Action ſlander'd Engliſh Wit:
You have beheld ſuch barb'rous Mac's appear,
As merited a ſecond maſſacre:
Such as, like Cain, were branded with diſgrace,
And had their country ſtamp'd upon their face.
When ſtrollers durſt preſume to pick your purſe,
We humbly thought our broken troop not worſe.
How ill ſoe'er our action may deſerve,
Oxford's a place, where Wit can never ſtarve.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To the Univerſity of OXFORD.

THOUGH actors cannot much of learning boaſt,
Of all who want it, we admire it moſt;
We love the praiſes of a Learned Pit,
As we remotely are ally'd to Wit.
We ſpeak our Poet's Wit, and trade in ore,
Like thoſe, who touch upon the golden ſhore:
Betwixt our judges can diſtinction make,
Diſcern how much, and why, our poems take:
Mark if the fools, or men of ſenſe, rejoice;
Whether th' applauſe be only ſound or voice.
When our fop gallants, or our city folly
Clap over-loud, it makes us melancholy:
We doubt that ſcene which does their wonder raiſe,
And, for their ignorance, contemn their praiſe.
Judge then, if we who act, and they who write,
Shou'd not be proud of giving you delight.

London likes groſly; but this nicer Pit
Examines, fathoms all the depths of Wit;
The ready finger lays on every blot;
Knows what ſhou'd juſtly pleaſe, and what ſhou'd not.
Nature herſelf lies open to your view;
You judge by her, what draught of her is true,
Where out-lines falſe, and colours ſeem too faint,
Where bunglers dawb, and where true Poets paint.
But by the ſacred Genius of this place,
By ev'ry muſe, by each domeſtick grace,
Be kind to Wit, which but endeavours well,
And, where you judge, preſumes not to excel.
Our Poets hither for adoption come,
As nations ſu'd to be made free of Rome:
Not in the ſuffragating tribes to ſtand,
But in your utmoſt, laſt, provincial band.
If his ambition may thoſe hopes purſue,
Who with religion loves your arts and you,
Oxford to him a dearer name ſhall be,
Than his own Mother Univerſity.
Thebes did his green, unknowing, youth engage:
He chuſes Athens in his riper age.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

To ALBUMAZAR.

TO ſay, this Comedy pleas'd long ago,
Is not enough to make it paſs you now.
Yet, gentlemen, your anceſtors had wit;
When few men cenſur'd, and when fewer writ.
And Johnſon, of thoſe few the beſt, choſe this,
As the beſt model of his maſter-piece:

Subtle was got by our Albumazar,
That Alchymiſt by this Aſtrologer;
Here he was faſhion'd, and we may ſuppoſe
He lik'd the faſhion well, who wore the clothes.
But Ben made nobly His what he did mould;
What was another's lead, becomes his gold:
Like an unrighteous conqueror he reigns,
Yet rules that well, which he unjuſtly gains.
But this our age ſuch authors does afford,
As make whole plays, and yet ſcarce write one word:
Who, in this anarchy of wit, rob all,
And what's their plunder, their poſſeſſion call:
Who, like bold padders, ſcorn by night to prey,
But rob by ſun-ſhine, in the face of day:
Nay ſcarce the common ceremony uſe
Of, ſtand, Sir, and deliver up your Muſe;
But knock the Poet down, and, with a grace,
Mount Pegaſus before the owner's face.
Faith, if you have ſuch country Toms abroad,
'Tis time for all true men to leave that road.
Yet it were modeſt, could it but be ſaid,
They ſtrip the living, but theſe rob the dead;
Dare with the Mummies of the Muſes play,
And make love to them the Ægyptian way;
Or, as a rhiming author would have ſaid,
Join the dead living to the living dead.
Such men in Poetry may claim ſome part:
They have the licenſe, though they want the art;
And might, where theft was prais'd, for laureats ſtand
Poets, not of the head, but of the hand.
They make the benefits of others ſtudying,
Much like the meals of politick Jack-Pudding,
Whoſe diſh to challenge no man has the courage;
'Tis all his own when once h' has ſpit i' th' porridge.

But, gentlemen, you're all concern'd in this;
You are in fault for what they do amiſs:
For they their thefts ſtill undiſcover'd think,
And durſt not ſteal, unleſs you pleaſe to wink.
Perhaps, you may award by your decree,
They ſhould refund; but that can never be.
For ſhould you letters of repriſal ſeal,
Theſe men write that which no man elſe would ſteal.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

Spoken at the Revival of ARVIRAGUS and PHILICIA, written by *Lodowick Carell*, Eſq;

WITH fickly Actors and an old Houſe too,
We're match'd with glorious theatres and new,
And with our ale-houſe ſcenes, and clothes bare worn,
Can neither raiſe old Plays, nor new adorn.
If all theſe ills could not undo us quite,
A briſk French troop is grown your dear delight;
Who with broad bloody bills call you each day,
To laugh and break your buttons at their play;
Or ſee ſome ſerious piece, which we preſume,
Is fall'n from ſome incomparable plume;
And therefore, Meſſieurs, if you'll do us grace,
Send lacquies early to preſerve your place.
We dare not on your privilege intrench,
Or aſk you why you like 'em? they are French.
Therefore ſome go with courteſy exceeding,
Neither to hear nor ſee, but ſhew their breeding:
Each lady ſtriving to out-laugh the reſt;
To make it ſeem they underſtood the jeſt.

Their countrymen come in, and nothing pay,
To teach us Engliſh where to clap the Play:
Civil igad! Our hoſpitable land
Bears all the charge, for them to underſtand:
Mean time we languiſh, and neglected lie,
Like wives, while you keep better company;
And wiſh for your own ſakes, without a ſatire,
You'd leſs good breeding, or had more good-nature.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

Spoken the firſt Day of the King's Houſe acting after the Fire.

SO ſhipwreck'd paſſengers eſcape to land,
So look they, when on the bare beach they ſtand
Dropping and cold, and their firſt fear ſcarce o'er,
Expecting famine on a deſart ſhore.
From that hard climate we muſt wait for bread,
Whence e'en the natives, forc'd by hunger, fled.
Our Stage does human chance preſent to view,
But ne'er before was ſeen ſo ſadly true:
You are chang'd too, and your pretence to ſee
Is but a nobler name for charity.
Your own proviſions furniſh out our feaſts,
While you the founders make yourſelves the gueſts.
Of all mankind beſide fate had ſome care,
But for poor Wit no portion did prepare,
'Tis left a rent-charge to the brave and fair.
You cheriſh'd it, and now its fall you mourn,
Which blind unmanner'd zealots make their ſcorn,
Who think that fire a judgment on the Stage,
Which ſpar'd not temples in its furious rage.

But as our new-built City riſes higher,
So from old Theatres may new aſpire,
Since fate contrives magnificence by fire.
Our great metropolis does far ſurpaſs
Whate'er is now, and equals all that was:
Our Wit as far does foreign Wit excel,
And, like a King, ſhou'd in a Palace dwell.
But we with golden hopes are vainly fed,
Talk high, and entertain you in a ſhed:
Your preſence here (for which we humbly ſue)
Will grace old Theatres, and build up new.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN,

For the Women, when they acted at the old Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*.

WERE none of you, gallants, e'er driven ſo hard,
As when the poor kind ſoul was under guard,
And cou'd not do't at home, in ſome by-ſtreet
To take a lodging, and in private meet?
Such is our caſe, we can't appoint our houſe,
The lover's old and wonted rendezvous;
But hither to this truſty nook remove;
The worſe the lodging is, the more the love.
For much good paſtime, many a dear ſweet hug,
Is ſtol'n in garrets on the humble rug.
Here's good accommodation in the pit,
The grave demurely in the midſt may ſit;
And ſo the hot Burgundian on the ſide
Ply Vizard Maſk, and o'er the benches ſtride:
Here are convenient upper boxes too,
For thoſe that make the moſt triumphant ſhow;
All that keep coaches muſt not ſit below.

There, gallants, you betwixt the acts retire,
And at dull Plays have ſomething to admire:
We, who look up, can your addreſſes mark;
And ſee the creatures coupled in the ark:
So we expect the lovers, braves, and wits;
The gaudy Houſe with Scenes will ſerve for cits.

EPILOGUE by DRYDEN,

For the King's Houſe.

WE act by fits and ſtarts, like drowning men,
But juſt peep up, and then pop down again.
Let thoſe, who call us wicked, change their ſenſe;
For never men liv'd more on providence.
Not lott'ry cavaliers are half ſo poor,
Nor broken cits, nor a vacation whore.
Not courts, nor courtiers living on the rents
Of the three laſt ungiving parliaments:
So wretched, that, if Pharaoh could divine,
He might have ſpared his dream of ſeven lean kine,
And chang'd his viſion for the Muſes Nine.
The Comet, that, they ſay, portends a dearth,
Was but a vapour drawn from Play-houſe earth:
Pent there ſince our laſt Fire, and, Lilly ſays,
Foreſhews our change of ſtate, and thin Third-days.
'Tis not our want of Wit that keeps us poor,
For then the Printer's Preſs would ſuffer more.
Their pamphleteers each day their venom ſpit;
They thrive by Treaſon, and we ſtarve by Wit.
Confeſs the truth, which of you has not laid
Four farthings out to buy the Hatfield Maid?
Or, which is duller yet, and more wou'd ſpite us,
Democritus his Wars with Heraclitus?

Such are the authors, who have run us down,
And exercis'd you criticks of the town.
Yet theſe are pearls to your lampooning Rhimes,
Y' abuſe yourſelves more dully than the times.
Scandal, the Glory of the Engliſh nation,
Is worn to rags, and ſcribbled out of faſhion.
Such harmleſs thruſts, as if, like fencers wiſe,
They had agreed their play before their prize.
Faith, they may hang their harps upon the willows;
'Tis juſt like children when they box with pillows.
Then put an end to civil wars for ſhame;
Let each knight-errant, who has wrong'd a dame,
Throw down his pen, and give her, as he can,
The ſatisfaction of a gentleman.

PROLOGUE by DRYDEN.

GALLANTS, a baſhful Poet bids me ſay,
He's come to loſe his maidenhead to-day.
Be not too fierce; for he's but green of age,
And ne'er, till now, debauch'd upon the Stage.
He wants the ſuff'ring part of reſolution,
And comes with bluſhes to his execution.
Ere you deflower his muſe, he hopes the pit
Will make ſome ſettlement upon his wit.
Promiſe him well before the Play begin;
For he wou'd fain be cozen'd into ſin.
'Tis not but that he knows you mean to fail;
But, if you leave him after being frail,
He'll have, at leaſt, a fair pretence to rail;
To call you baſe, and ſwear you us'd him ill,
And put you in the new deſerters bill.

Lord, what a troop of perjur'd men we ſee;
Enow to fill another Mercury!
But this the ladies may with patience brook:
Theirs are not the firſt colours you forſook.
He wou'd be loth the beauties to offend;
But, if he ſhou'd, he's not too old to mend.
He's a young plant, in his firſt year of bearing;
But his friend ſwears he will be worth the rearing.
His gloſs is ſtill upon him: Though 'tis true
He's yet unripe, yet take him for the blue.
You think an Apricot half green is beſt;
There's ſweet and ſour, and one ſide good at leaſt.
Mangos and Limes, whoſe nouriſhment is little,
Though not for food, are yet preſerv'd for pickle.
So this green Writer may pretend at leaſt.
To whet your ſtomachs for a better feaſt.
He makes this difference in the ſexes too;
He ſells to men, he gives himſelf to you.
To both he wou'd contribute ſome delight;
A meer poetical Hermaphrodite.
Thus he's equipp'd, both to be woo'd, and woo;
With arms offenſive, and defenſive too;
'Tis hard, he thinks, if neither part will do.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s THEODOSIUS; or, the Force of Love.

WIT long oppreſs'd, and fill'd at laſt with rage,
Thus in a ſullen mood rebukes the age.
What loads of fame do modern heroes bear,
For an inglorious, long, and lazy war?
Who for ſome ſkirmiſh, or a ſafe retreat,
(Not to be dragg'd to battle) are call'd great.
But oh! what do ambitious ſtateſmen gain,
Who into private cheſts whole nations drain?
What ſums of gold they hoard, is daily known,
To all men's coſt, and ſometimes to their own.
Your lawyer too, that like an *O Yes* bawls,
That drowns the Market-Higler in the ſtalls,
That ſeems begot, conceiv'd, and born in brawls,
Yet thrives: He and his crowd get what they pleaſe,
Swarming all Term-time thro' the Strand like bees,
They buz at Weſtminſter, and lye for fees.
The godly too their way of getting have;
But none ſo much as your fanatick knave:
Wiſely the wealthieſt livings they refuſe,
Who by the fatteſt biſhopricks would loſe;
Who with ſhort hair, large ears, and ſmall blue band,
True rogues, their own, not God's elect command.
Let pigs then be prophane; but broth's allow'd,
Poſſets and chriſtian caudles may be good
Meet-helps, to reinforce a brother's blood:
Therefore each female ſaint he doth adviſe,
With groans, and hums, and has and gogling eyes,
To rub him down, and make the ſpirit riſe:

While with his zeal, tranſported from the ground,
He mounts, and ſanctifies the ſiſters round.
On poets only no kind ſtar e'er ſmil'd,
Curſt fate has damn'd 'em ev'ry mother's child:
Therefore he warns his brothers of the ſtage,
To write no more for an ungrateful age.
Think what penurious maſters you have ſerv'd;
Taſſo run mad, and noble Spenſer ſtarv'd.
Turn then, who e'er thou art, that can'ſt write well,
Thy ink to gall, and in lampoons excel.
Forſwear all honeſty, traduce the Great,
Grow impudent, and rail againſt the State;
Burſting with ſpleen, abroad thy paſquils ſend,
And chuſe ſome libel-ſpreader for thy friend:
The wit and want of Timon point thy mind,
And for thy ſatire-ſubject chuſe mankind.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

THRICE happy they that never writ before;
How pleas'd and bold they quit the ſafer ſhore:
Like ſome new Captain of the City Bands,
That with big looks in Finſbury commands,
Swell'd with huge ale, he cries, beat, beat a drum;
Pox on the French King, uds-bud let him come:
Give me ten thouſand Red-coats, and alloo,
We'll firk his Crequi and his Conde too.
Thus the young ſcriblers mankind's ſenſe diſdain;
For ignorance is ſure to make 'em vain;
But far from vanity, or dang'rous pride,
Our cautious poet courts you to his ſide:

For why ſhould you be ſcorn'd, to whom are due
All the good days that ever Authors knew?
If ever gay, 'tis you that make 'em fine;
The pit and boxes make the Poet dine,
And he ſcarce drinks but of the Critick's wine.
Old writers ſhould not for vain-glory ſtrive;
But like old miſtreſſes, think how to thrive;
Be fond of every thing their keepers ſay,
At leaſt till they can live without a Play.
Like one that knows the trade, and has been bit,
She doats and fawns upon her wealthy cit,
And ſwears ſhe loves him, merely for his wit.
Another, more untaught than a Walloon,
Antick and ugly, like an old Baboon,
She ſwears, is an accompliſh'd Beau-garſon;
Turns with all winds, and ſails with all deſires;
All hearts in city, town, and court ſhe fires,
Young callow lords, lean knights, and driv'ling ſquires.
She in reſiſtleſs flattery finds her ends,
Gives thanks for fools, and makes ye all her friends;
So ſhould wiſe Poets ſooth an awkard age,
For they are proſtitutes upon the ſtage:
To ſtand on points were fooliſh and ill-bred,
As for a lady to be nice in bed:
Your wills alone muſt their performance meaſure,
And you may turn 'em ev'ry way for pleaſure.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s LUCIUS JUNIUS BRUTUS.

Written by Mr. *Duke*.

LONG has the tribe of Poets on the Stage,
Groan'd under perſecuting Criticks rage;
But with the ſound of railing and of rhime,
Like bees united by the tinkling chime,
The little ſtinging inſects ſwarm the more,
And buz is greater than it was before.
But oh! you leading voters of the pit,
That infect others with your too much wit;
That well-affected members do ſeduce,
And with your malice poiſon half the houſe;
Know your ill-manag'd arbitrary ſway
Shall be no more endur'd, but ends this day.
Rulers of abler conduct we will chuſe,
And more indulgent to a trembling Muſe;
Women for ends of government more fit,
Women ſhall rule the Boxes and the Pit,
Give laws to love, and influence to wit.
Find me one Man of Senſe in all your roll,
Whom ſome one Woman has not made a fool.
Even buſineſs, that intolerable load,
Under which man does groan, and yet is proud,
Much better they can manage wou'd they pleaſe;
'Tis not their want of wit, but love of eaſe.
For, ſpite of art, more wit in them appears;
Though we boaſt ours, and they diſſemble theirs:
Wit once was ours, and ſhot up for a while,
Set ſhallow in a hot and barren ſoil;

But when tranſplanted to a richer ground,
Has in their Eden its perfection found.
And 'tis but juſt they ſhou'd our wit invade,
Whilſt we ſet up their painting, patching trade;
As for our courage, to our ſhame 'tis known,
As they can raiſe it, they can pull it down.
At their own weapons they our bullies awe;
Faith, let them make an anti-ſalick law,
Preſcribe to all mankind, as well as plays,
And wear the breeches, as they wear the bays.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

NO cringing ſirs, the Poet's champion I
Have ſworn to ſtand, and ev'ry judge defy;
But why each bullying critick ſhould I name,
A judge whoſe only buſineſs is to damn?
While you your arbitrary fiſt advance
At wit, and duſt it like a boor of France;
Who, without ſhew of reaſon or pretence,
Condemn a man to die for ſpeaking ſenſe;
Howe'er we term'd you once the wiſe, the ſtrong,
Know we have born your impotence too long:
You that above your ſires preſume to ſoar,
And are but copies dawb'd in miniature;
You that have nothing right in heart nor tongue,
But only to be reſolute in wrong:
Who ſenſe affect with ſuch an awkward air,
As if a Frenchman ſhould become ſevere;
Or an Italian make his wife a jeſt,
Like Spaniards pleaſant, or [illegible]

That rank the nobleſt Poets with the vile,
And look yourſelves in a Plebeian ſtile;
But with an oath ———
Falſe as your wit and judgment now I ſwear,
By the known maidenheads of each theatre;
Nay, by my own, the Poets ſhall not ſtand,
Like Shrovetide cocks, the pelt of every hand.
Let not the purblind Critick's ſentence paſs,
That ſhoots the Poet through an optick glaſs;
No peals of ill-plac'd praiſe from galleries come,
Nor punk below to clap, or hiſs, preſume;
Let her not cackle as the ſops that flout her,
Nor cluck the ſquires that uſe to pipp about her;
No full-blown blockhead, bloated, like an ox,
Traverſe the pit, with damme, what a pox.
Know then for ev'ry miſdemeanor here
I'll be more ſtabbing, ſharp, and more ſevere,
Than the fell ſhe that on her keeper comes,
Who in his drink laſt night laid waſte her rooms;
Thunder'd her china, damn'd her quality,
Her glaſſes broke, and tore her Point Venie;
That dragg'd her by the hair, and broke her head,
A chamber lion, but a lamb in bed:
Like her I'll teize you for your midnight ſtorming,
For your all talking, and your no performing;
You that with monſtrous judgment force the Stage,
You fribling, fumbling keepers of the age.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s MITHRIDATES, King of PONTUS.

NOT careful leaders, when the trumpets call
Their martial ſquadrons on, to ſtand or fall,
Toſs'd with more doubts, than careful Poets are,
When vent'rous wit for ſally does prepare;
When humming voices bid the play begin,
And the laſt flouriſh calls the Prologue in.
Here you, like dreadful warriors judging fit:
And in full council, try all writers wit.
To ſome, for ſenſe renown'd, our authors bow;
And what you doom, for a juſt fate allow:
But ſure far leſs ſuch judges Poets dread,
Than thoſe raw blades who will not let them plead,
But, e'er they can be heard, cry, ſhoot 'em dead.
Theſe pyrates, that both arms and wit debaſe;
Who fields, and poems with their ſpleen diſgrace,
Poets and warriors, both ſhould have in chaſe:
Theſe libellers, who nobleſt flights deſpiſe,
Yet when a pan but flaſhes, ſhut their eyes;
Who write lampoons, and vilely get a name
By others infamy, and live on ſhame;
Fifes, whiſtlers, of the juſteſt ſenſe, not fit
To be the powder-monkeys of true wit:
Mimicks, like apes, what's ill from heads they drain,
And live upon the vermin of a brain.
Neglected theſe, and truſting to your aid,
To Beauty our laſt vows, like yours, are made:

Beauty, which ſtill adorns the op'ning liſt,
Which Cæſar's heart vouchſafes not to reſiſt:
To that alone devoted is this day;
For, by the Poet, I was bid to ſay,
In the firſt draught, 'twas meant the Lady's Play.

EPILOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s CÆSAR BORGIA.

WELL, then be you his judges; what pretence
Made them roar out, this Play would give offence?
Had he the Pope's effigies meant to burn,
And kept for ſport his aſhes in an urn;
To try if reliques would perform, at home,
But half thoſe miracles they do at Rome;
More could not have been ſaid, nor more been done,
To damn this Play about the court and town:
Not if he 'ad ſhewn their philters, charms and rage,
Nay, conjur'd up Pope Joan to pleaſe the age,
And had her breeches ſearch'd upon the ſtage.
Firſt then, he brings a ſcandal on the gown,
And makes a prieſt both letcher and buffoon?
Why, was no fool yet ever made a Flamen,
But dulneſs quite entail'd upon the lay-men?
Or was it ever heard in Rome before,
That any prieſt was queſtion'd for his whore?
Yet more, the horrid chair, the midnight ſhow——
He ſays 'twas done two hundred years ago:
He only points their ways of murdering then;
If you muſt damn, ſpare the hiſtorian's pen,
And damn thoſe rogues that act 'em o'er again.
But Dominicks, Franciſcans, Hermits, Fryars,
Shall breed no more a race of zealous lyars;

Villains, who for religion's propagation,
Come here diſguis'd in ev'ry mean vocation,
And ſit in ſtalls to ſpy upon the nation.
Old emiſſaries ſhall their trade forbear,
Spread no more Savoy reliques, bones and hair,
Shall ſell no more like baubles in a fair:
Monks under ground ſhall ceaſe to earth like moles,
And Father Lewis leave his lurking holes;
Get no more thirty pounds for a blind ſtory,
Of freeing a Welch ſoul from purgatory.
Jeſuits in Rome ſhall quite forſwear their function,
And not for gold give whores the Extreme Unction:
High Engliſh whores, that have all vices paſt,
Shall ceaſe to turn true Catholicks at laſt,
When poets write, though by exacteſt rules,
And are not judg'd by knaves, and damn'd by fools.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s CONSTANTINE the GREAT.

WHAT think ye meant wiſe Providence when firſt
Poets were made? I'd tell you, if I durſt;
That 'twas in contradiction to Heav'ns word,
That when its ſpirit o'er the waters ſtirr'd,
When it ſaw All, and ſaid that All was good,
The creature Poet was not underſtood.
For, were it worth the pains of ſix long days,
To mould retailers of dull third-day plays,
That ſtarve out threeſcore years in hopes of Bays?
'Tis plain they ne'er were of the firſt creation,
But came of mere equiv'cal generation:
Like rats in ſhips, without coition bred,
As hated too as they are, and unfed.

Nature their ſpecies ſure muſt needs diſown,
Scarce knowing poets, leſs by poets known.
Yet this poor thing, ſo ſcorn'd, and ſet at nought,
Ye all pretend to, and would fain be thought.
Diſabled waſting whore-maſters are not
Prouder to own the brats they never got,
Than fumbling, itching rhymers of the town,
T' adopt ſome baſe-born ſong that's not their own.
Spite of his ſtate, my lord ſometimes deſcends,
To pleaſe the importunity of friends.
The dulleſt he thought moſt for buſineſs fit,
'Twill venture his bought place to aim at wit;
And though he ſinks with his employs of ſtate,
'Till common ſenſe forſake him, he'll tranſlate.
The poet and the whore alike complains
Of trading quality, that ſpoils their gains;
The lords will write, and ladies will have ſwains.
Therefore, all you who have male-iſſue born,
Under the ſtarving Sign of Capricorn;
Prevent the malice of their ſtars in time,
And warn them early from the ſin of rhyme:
Tell 'em how Spenſer ſtarv'd, how Cowley mourn'd,
How Butler's faith and ſervice was return'd;
And if ſuch warning they refuſe to take,
This laſt experiment, O parents! make:
With hands behind them ſee th' offender ty'd,
The pariſh whip, and beadle by his ſide;
Then lead him to ſome ſtall that does expoſe
The authors he loves moſt, there rub his noſe;
Till like a ſpaniel laſh'd, to know command,
He by the due correction underſtand,
To keep his brains clean, and not foul the land:
Till he againſt his nature learn to ſtrive,
And get the knack of dullneſs how to thrive.

EPILOGUE

To Mr. *Lee's* SOPHONISBA, ſpoken at *Oxford.*

TO this learn'd audience gladly we ſubmit
At once our action and our poet's wit.
Whoſe ſhades, well pleas'd, to theſe fam'd ſeats repair,
To hear the muſes breathe their native air:
Free from the partial cenſure of the town,
Where ſenſeleſs faction runs the poet down;
Where flutt'ring hectors on the vizard fall,
One half o'th' play they ſpend in noiſe and brawl,
Sleep out the reſt, then wake and damn it all.
To you the labour'd ſcene is better known,
In which no poets have excell'd your own.
When ſome fam'd hero on the ſtage is ſeen,
You ſtrait reflect ſuch was his god-like mien;
To ſuch extent did his vaſt conqueſts ſwell,
He reign'd thus glorious, thus untimely fell:
Knowing th' original, you the copy praiſe,
And crown the artiſt with deſerved bays.
Thus to their merits we our poets leave,
But for our ſelves your milder cenſure crave,
That all defects i'th' action you'd impute
T' our ſtraitned ſtage, 'tis ours, the Womens ſuit.
The gown to beauty never was unkind,
But form'd by that th' ideas of the mind.
'Twas from the ſchools our firſt reſpects we gain'd,
Who of our ſex their ſciences have feign'd.
Thus were the muſes, thus the graces dreſt,
And Plato thus his virtue has expreſt.
We know what's due to Sophoniſba's fame,
And more to Roſalinda's chaſter name.

Nor can we wholly ignorant appear,
Of thoſe learn'd languages that flouriſh here.
Be not ſurpriz'd if we invade your right,
And Ovid's or Catullus' loves recite,
Or paſs from Virgil's labours of Æneas,
To *Menin aeide Thea Peleiadeo Achileos.*

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s NERO, EMPEROR of ROME.

GOOD plays, and perfect ſenſe as ſcarce are grow
As civil women in this damn'd lewd town.
Plain ſenſe is deſpicable as plain clothes,
As Engliſh hats, bone-lace, or woollen hoſe.
'Tis your briſk fool that is your Man of note;
Yonder he goes, in the embroider'd coat;
Such wenching eyes, and hands ſo prone to ruffle;
The genteel fling, the trip and modiſh ſhuffle;
Salt ſoul and flame, as gay as any prince:
Thus taggs and ſilks make up your men of ſenſe.
I'm told that ſome are preſent here to day,
Whoe'er they ſee reſolve to damn this play,
So much wou'd intereſt with ill-nature ſway.
But ladies, you we hope, will prove more civil,
And charm theſe wits that damn beyond the devil;
Then let each critick here, all hell inherit,
You have attractions that can lay a ſpirit.
A bloody fatal play you'll ſee to night,
I vow to God, 't has put me in a fright.
The meaneſt waiter huffs, looks big, and ſtruts,
Gives breaſt a blow, then hand on hilt he puts;
'Tis a fine age, a tearing thund'ring age,
Pray heav'n this thund'ring does not crack the ſtage:

This play I like not now———
And yet for ought I know, it may be good,
But ſtill I hate this fighting, wounds and blood.
Why what the devil have I to do with honour?
Let heroes court her, I cry, pox upon her:
All tragedies i'gad to me ſound odly,
I can no more be ſerious, than you godly.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

HOW dull, how grave, and how preciſe ye ſit,
As if ye had acted love, not taſted wit.
When the tricks done, like wine unſtopt ye pall
After enjoyment, thus it's with you all.
Your modiſh plays like jaunty miſſes ſhou'd
Be bravely dreſt, high flown, more fine than good;
For clothes attract ye more than fleſh and blood.
Like cover'd viands beauties hid from ſight,
Raiſe drooping fancy up to new delight:
For you gallants, ye gay briſk witty men,
He knows your killing trade, your damning ſtrain;
Ye can as well wenches and drink refrain.
Yet faith for my ſweet ſake be kind to night,
Or may this heavy curſe upon you light:
May each gallant that has an aſſignation,
Be jilted after four hours expectation;
Or if the maſked gentlewoman come,
Spite of long ſcarf, may ſhe be dogg'd from home.
May ye———
In height of titillation hear a rapping,
And then the jealous cuckold take ye napping.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Lee*'s GLORIANA; or, the Court of Aug. Cæſar.

HE whoſe attempt is ſhewn this night to pleaſe,
Beheld me entring, and my arm did ſeize,
Cry'd, Madam, ſtay, ſtay but one minute more;
But I, your ſervant, left him at the door.
How dear, and yet how dreadful is the night,
That makes a Poet, or undoes him quite?
Such is the night, when a kind-hearted maid
Becomes a ſacrifice to bridal-bed:
She fears to give what yet ſhe wiſhes paſt,
Cries fye, no, and drives it to the laſt.
If to be brought o'th' ſtage ſo much can fright,
What devil makes you all ſo mad to write?
But hold, let me conſider ———
Wit which was formerly but recreation,
Is now become the buſineſs of the nation;
Prentices write lampoons, your Juſtices
Have quirks for courtiers late debaucheries,
And conſtables with quibbles break the peace.
Your formal citizen turns man of ſenſe,
And has to ingenuity pretence:
Treats miſs in box, which was but punk with you,
Gripes her craz'd knee, and treads upon her toe,
And cries, I' fack, my dear, this play will do:
With beard preciſe his verdict dares pronounce,
Who by predeſtination is a dunce:
All will be cenſuring a man that writes,
And praiſe or damn him like a man that fights.

With boldneſs therefore both ſhould be inſpir'd,
The ſtout and witty ſhould alike be fir'd:
Poets, like men of courage, that begin,
Should ſtill puſh forward when they're enter'd in;
Till certain of applauſe they write with eaſe,
And with juſt forces are reſolv'd to pleaſe:
The little wits of courſe will then obey,
And briſkly ſwear the faſhionable way,
To all that thoſe inſipidly can ſay:
So a young ſharp-ſet bully ———
With famine pinch'd, and given much to think,
Who thirſts for fame, but thirſts much more for drink,
Reſolves to periſh, or inhance his name,
And gives not o'er till he proves cock o'th' game;
Then he who lately ſeem'd like winter bare,
Comes forth like ſummer looſely clad and clear;
He drives the 'ſquires with breath of pantaloons,
And the leaſt word he ſpeaks is Blood and Wounds.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

YOUR ſervants, gentlemen: 'tis a long time
Since I had th' honour to converſe with you in rhime;
They told me at t' other houſe y' had left us quite,
And I was going to hang myſelf out-right,
But for the hopes of pleaſing you to night:
For what's inſipid life to them or me,
Without the favour of your company?
Good faith I'm very glad to ſee you here,
'Tis well you can at a new play appear:

This winter you forſaking all the old,
Kept up one while of a damn'd pocky cold;
Some few came here, but who the lord can tell,
All were ſhrunk up like ſnails within their ſhell;
Huge Brandenburgh had ſo diſguis'd each one,
That from your coachman you could ſcarce be known;
And then you droop'd as if half-drown'd you came
Scap'd from North-Holland, or from Amſterdam;
And cough'd, heav'n ſave you, with as grave a motion,
As you'd been at church, where 'tis devotion.
The ladies too neglecting every grace,
Mobb'd up in night-clothes, came with lace to face,
The tow'r upon the forehead all turn'd back,
And ſtuck with pins like th' man i'th' almanack.
The miſſes, thoſe delights of human kind,
No longer in their dear ſide-boxes ſhin'd,
But each to chamber-practice did retire,
With ale and apples, and a ſea-coal fire:
Now this misfortune we by yours have found,
Your cold ſtill ſticks by us, though you are ſound.
But, ſirs, what makes it now ſo hard, I pray,
To get you here but juſt at a new play?
We've play'd t' oblige you all that's in our pow'rs,
We've play'd and play'd ourſelves e'en out of doors;
And yet we cannot find one way to pin ye,
You're grown ſo nice, I think the devil's in ye.
But hold, there's one way yet to get your praiſe,
Ill-treating you your appetites may raiſe;
Lampoons and libels we for plays muſt write,
Criticks, like lovers pall'd with their delight,
Always eſteem thoſe kiſſes beſt that bite.
We'll deal with you, gallants, in your own way,
And treat you like thoſe punks that love for pay;

Cartwright and I, dreſs'd like two thund'ring whores,
With rods will ſtand behind the play-houſe doors,
And firk ye up each day to pleaſures duly,
As Jenny Cromwell does, or Betty Buly.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Lee*'s RIVAL QUEENS; or, the Death of *Alexander* the *Great*.

Written by Sir *Car Scroop*, Bart.

HOW hard the fate is of the ſcribbling drudge,
Who writes to all, when yet ſo few can judge!
Wit, like religion, once divine was thought;
And the dull crowd believ'd as they were taught;
Now each fanatick fool preſumes t' explain
The text, and does the ſacred writ profane:
For, while your wits each others fall purſue,
The fops uſurp the power belongs to you.
You think y' are challeng'd in each new play-bill,
And here you come for trial of your ſkill;
Where fencer like you one another hurt,
While with your wounds you make the rabble ſport.
Others there are that have the brutal will
To murder a poor play, but want the ſkill.
They love to fight, but ſeldom have the wit
To ſpy the place where they may thruſt and hit;
And therefore, like ſome bully of the town,
Ne'er ſtand to draw, but knock the poet down.
With theſe, like hogs in gardens, it ſucceeds,
They root up all, and know not flow'rs from weeds.
As for you, ſparks, that hither come each day,
To act your own, and not to mind our play;

Rehearſe your uſual follies to the pit,
And with loud nonſenſe drown the ſtage's wit;
Talk of your clothes, your laſt debauches tell,
And witty bargains to each other ſell;
Glout on the ſilly ſhe, who for your ſake
Can vanity and noiſe for love miſtake;
Till the coquet ſung in the next lampoon
Is by her jealous friends ſent out of town.
For, in this duelling, intriguing age,
The love you make is like the war you wage:
Y'are ſtill prevented e'er you come t'engage.
But 'tis not to ſuch trifling foes as you,
The mighty Alexander deigns to ſue;
Ye Perſians of the pit he does deſpiſe,
But to the men of ſenſe for aid he flies;
On their experienc'd arms he now depends,
Nor fears he odds, if they but prove his friends:
For as he once a little handful choſe,
The num'rous armies of the world t' oppoſe,
So back'd by you, who underſtand the rules,
He hopes to rout the mighty hoſt of fools.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

WHate'er they mean, yet ought they to be curſt,
Who this cenſorious age did poliſh firſt:
Who the beſt play, for one poor error blame,
As prieſts againſt our ladies arts declaim,
And for one patch both ſoul and body damn.
But what does more provoke the actor's rage,
(For we muſt ſhew the grievance of the ſtage)

Is, that our women which adorn each play,
Bred at our coſt, become at length our prey:
While green and ſour, like trees we bear them all,
But when they're mellow, ſtrait to you they fall:
You watch 'em bare and ſquab, and let 'em reſt,
But with the firſt young down you ſnatch the neſt.
Pray leave thoſe poaching tricks, if you are wiſe,
E'er we take out our letters of reprize.
For we have vow'd to find a ſort of toys
Known to black fryars, a tribe of chopping boys:
If once they come, they'll quickly ſpoil your ſport;
There's not one lady will receive your court;
But for the youth in petticoats run wild,
With oh, the archeſt wag, the ſweeteſt child,
The panting breaſt, white hands, and lilly feet
No more ſhall your pall'd thoughts with pleaſure meet.
The woman in boy clothes, all boy ſhall be,
And never raiſe your thoughts above the knee.
Well, if our women knew how falſe you are,
They wou'd ſtay here, and this new trouble ſpare:
Poor ſouls, they think all goſpel you relate,
Charm'd with the noiſe of ſettling an eſtate:
But when at laſt your appetites are full,
And the tir'd Cupid grows, with action, dull;
You'll find ſome trick to cut off the entail,
And ſend 'em back to us all worn and ſtale.
Perhaps they'll find our ſtage, while they have rang'd
To ſome vile canting conventicle, chang'd:
Where, for the ſparks who once reſorted there
With their curl'd wigs that ſcented all the air,
They'll ſee grave blockheads with ſhort greaſy hair.
Green-aprons, ſteeple-hats, and collar-bands;
Dull ſniv'ling rogues that wring, not clap, their hands;

Where, for gay punks that drew the ſhining crowd,
And miſſes that in vizards laugh'd aloud,
They'll hear young ſiſters ſigh, ſee matrons old,
To their chop'd cheeks their pickled kerchers hold,
Whoſe zeal too might perſuade, in ſpite to you,
Our flying angels to augment their crew;
While Farringdon their hero ſtruts about 'em,
And ne'er a damning critick dares to flout 'em.

PROLOGUE by Mr. MOUNTFORT,

To Mr. *N. Lee*'s MASSACRE of PARIS.

THIS day we ſhew you the moſt bloody rage
That ever did religious fiends engage;
A reconcilement, with a wedding-feaſt,
While murder was the treat for ev'ry gueſt:
Which well may prove to ages yet to come,
The faith of France, the charity of Rome.
France by the moſt deteſted perjury,
Enſlav'd its ſubjects, who by laws were free.
No ſacrament can this great hero bind,
Oaths are weak ſhackles for his mighty mind,
And worſe than heathens does he perſecute;
His prieſts want ſenſe and learning to diſpute;
But weak divines by ſtrong dragoons confute:
And whoe'er doubts of any prieſtly maggot,
Th' heretick dog muſt be convinc'd by faggot.
With Rome's religion and French government,
What ſlave ſo abject as to be content!
Now, idle malecontent, what is't you'd have?
Would you be an idolater or ſlave?
What do you murmur for, becauſe you're free,
And this bleſs'd iſle enjoys its liberty?

Croſs but the narrow ſeas, and you will find
Slav'ry and ſuperſtition to your mind.
Take with you all your friends that grumble too,
The land will happily be rid of you:
Then all as one with our great prince combin'd,
And his allies by ſacred union join'd,
Will ſuch falſe bloody tyrants ſtill oppoſe,
Till none ſhall dare to own the name of foes.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame by Mr. POWELL.

HOW wiſe are they, that can with patience bear,
And juſt reflections moderately hear,
Unmov'd by paſſion, as unſway'd by fear!
To them we dedicate this play to night,
That having long been baniſh'd from the light,
Huſh'd and impriſon'd cloſe as in the tow'r,
Half preſs'd to death by a diſpenſing pow'r;
To take a lawful trial for each fact,
Is juſt come out by th' Habeas Corpus act.
Rome's friends, no doubt, ſuppos'd there might be ſhown
Juſt ſuch an entertainment of their own;
The Plot, the Proteſtant; the Stage, the Town.
But no ſuch fear our Hugonots alarm'd;
True Engliſh hearts are always better arm'd;
For if the valiant in a little town,
Batter'd and ſtarving, their brave cauſe durſt own;
If peaſants ſcorning death, can guard our walls,
And the mild prieſthood turn to generals,
Britons ſtand firm, and in ſhort time you'll ſee,
Your own and neighb'ring realms, ſerene and free,
Clear'd from the choaking fogs of popery.

No Maſſacres, nor Revolutions fear;
Affairs are ſtrangely alter'd ſince laſt year:
Infallibility himſelf does run,
The garden's weeded, and the moles are gone.
Not gold to lawyers, to th' ambitious power,
Nor luſty Switzer to a luſtful whore,
To gameſters luck, to beauty length of days,
Nor to a wrinkl'd, wither'd widow, praiſe,
Can give ſuch joy, as to behold once more
An Engliſh army on the Gallick ſhore.
That this will be, the poets propheſy;
The poets all were prophets formerly.
T' inſpire 'em then, give ours to night his due;
His tale is ſomewhat bloody, but 'tis true.
A tragick truth ſhewn to an honeſt end,
And can the good or wiſe of neither ſect offend.
Fancy and ſtile, far as the reſt excel,
In our deliv'rance-year, let not tongue tell,
Poets the only curſt on whom no manna fell.
Plead that they may by Cæſar's influence breathe,
And mix a laurel with his oaken wreath.
Then ſhall his glory flouriſh to the height,
Then every pen ſhall panegyrick write.
This, this was he, who bleſt by ſacred pow'r,
To England its religion did reſtore,
So firm, that Rome cou'd never hurt it more.

PROLOGUE

To Sir G. *Etherege*'s COMICAL REVENGE; or, LOVE in a TUB.

WHO could expect ſuch crouding here to-day,
Meerly on the report of a new play?
A man wou'd think y'ave been ſo often bit
By us of late, you ſhould have learn'd more wit;
And firſt have ſent a forlorn hope to ſpy
The plot and language of our Comedy;
Expecting 'till ſome deſperate criticks had
Reſolv'd you, whether it were good or bad.
But yet, we hope you'll never grow ſo wiſe;
For if you ſhould, we and our comedies
Muſt trip to Norwich, or for Ireland go;
And never fix, but, like a puppet-ſhow,
Remove from town to town, from fair to fair,
Seeking fit chapmen to put off our ware.
For ſuch our fortune is, this barren age,
That faction now, not wit, ſupports the ſtage:
Wit has, like painting, had her happy flights,
And in peculiar ages reach'd her heights,
Though now declin'd: Yet, could ſome able pen
Match Fletcher's nature, or the art of Ben,
The old and graver ſort would ſcarce allow
Thoſe plays were good, becauſe we writ them now.
Our author therefore begs you would forget,
Moſt reverend judges, the records of wit;
And only think upon the modern way
Of writing, whilſt y'are cenſuring his play,

And, gallants, as for you, talk loud i'th' pit,
Divert yourſelves and friends with your own wit;
Obſerve the ladies, and neglect the play,
Or elſe 'tis fear'd we are undone to-day.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoke by the *Widow*.

SIR Frederick, now I am reveng'd on you;
For all your frolick wit, y'are couzen'd too:
I have made over all my wealth to theſe
Honeſt gentlemen; they are my truſtees.
Yet, gentlemen, if you are pleas'd you may
Supply his wants, and not your truſt betray.

Spoke by *Wheadle*.

Poor Wheadle hopes h'as giv'n you all content;
Here he proteſts 'tis that he only meant:
If y'are diſpleas'd, w'are all croſs bit to-day,
And he has wheedled us that writ the play.
Like pris'ners conſcious of th' offended law,
When juries after th' evidence withdraw;
So waits our author between hope and fear,
Until he does your doubtful verdict hear.
Men are more civil than in former days;
Few now in publick hiſs or rail at plays;
He bid me therefore mind your looks with care,
And told me I ſhould read your ſentence there;
But I, unſkill'd in faces, cannot gueſs
By this firſt view what is the play's ſucceſs;
Nor ſhall I eaſe the author of his fear,
'Till twice or thrice, at leaſt, I've ſeen you here.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *G. Etherege*'s MAN of MODE.

Written by Sir *Car Scroope*, Baronet.

LIKE dancers on the ropes poor poets fare,
Moſt periſh young, the reſt in danger are;
This (one would think) ſhould make our authors wary,
But, gameſter like, the giddy fools miſcarry.
A lucky hand or two ſo tempts 'em on,
They cannot leave off play till they're undone.
With modeſt fears a muſe does firſt begin,
Like a young wench newly entic'd to ſin:
But tickled once with praiſe, by her good will,
The wanton fool would never more lye ſtill.
'Tis an old miſtreſs you'll meet here to night,
Whoſe charms you once have look'd on with delight;
But now of late ſuch dirty drabs have known ye,
A muſe o'th' better ſort's aſham'd to own you.
Nature well drawn, and wit, muſt now give place
To gaudy nonſenſe, and to dull grimace:
Nor is it ſtrange that you ſhould like ſo much
That kind of wit, for moſt of yours is ſuch.
But I'm afraid, that while to France we go
To bring you home fine dreſſes, dance, and ſhow;
The ſtage, like you, will but more foppiſh grow.
Of foreign wares why ſhould we fetch the ſcum,
When we can be ſo richly ſerv'd at home?
For, heav'n be thank'd 'tis not ſo wiſe an age,
But your own follies may ſupply the ſtage.
Though often plow'd, there's no great fear the ſoil
Should barren grow by the too frequent toil;

While at your doors are to be daily found
Such loads of dunghill to manure the ground.
'Tis by your follies that we players thrive,
As the phyſicians by diſeaſes live.
And as each year ſome new diſtemper reigns,
Whoſe friendly poiſon helps t'increaſe their gains:
So among you, there ſtarts up every day,
Some new unheard-of fool for us to play.
Then for your own ſakes be not too ſevere,
Nor what you all admire at home, damn here.
Since each is fond of his own ugly face,
Why ſhould you, when we hold it, break the glaſs?

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Southerne*'s ANTHONY LOVE; or, the Rambling Lady.

THE ladies have a lonely ſummer paſt,
In hopes kind winter would return at laſt.
The ſeaſons change; but heroes are the ſame,
A Twelve-month running in purſuit of fame:
Theirs may be good, but they have ſpoilt our game.
Some weak amends this thin town might afford,
If honeſt gentlemen would keep their word.
But your lewd Tunbridge-ſcandal that was moving,
Foretold how ſad a time would come for loving.
Sad time indeed, when you begin to write:
'Tis a ſhrew'd ſign of wanting appetite,
When you forget yourſelves, to think of wit.
Whilſt thus your itch is only to beſpatter,
Your Cupid is transform'd into a ſatyr:
Nothing of man about you; all o'er beaſt;
Submitting your chief pleaſure to your jeſt.

The time will come (for Ireland falls of courſe,
And muſt ſend back her conquerors, and ours)
When each of us, our loſſes to recover,
Will mend her fortune in a ſoldier-lover:
They'll uſe us better much than you have done.
Take us, in paſſing, like an open town,
And plunder, do their buſineſs, and be gone.
Or if, at leiſure, they lye down to woo,
They'll rather make us whores, than call us ſo:
Not ſend a whiſp'ring libel through the town,
To blab the favour out, before 'tis done;
And maul the ladies only in lampoon.
But if they write in a ſententious ſtrain,
Two lines conclude the travels of their pen;
One, only to know where, and t'other, when.
And we can give a lover leave to write,
When all his bills are to be paid at ſight.
O! would our peaceful days were come again;
Then I might act it, on and off, a Queen.
When once the child was turn'd into her teens,
You could not find a maid behind the ſcenes.
But now your keeping humour's out o'door,
We muſt die maids, or marry to be poor.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

IF novelty has any charms to move,
We hope, to night, we've rais'd your drooping love:
Not to the youngſters of a noiſy pit,
Whoſe tongues and miſtreſſes out-run their wit:
But to the graver ſinners of the bench,
Who, from your mothers maids, have lov'd a wench:

Who, cheek by joul with time, have handed down
The vices of all ages to your own:
Here's a variety, that may delight
The palate of each age's appetite.
To you I'm ſent, you who have dearly known
The ſeveral rates of pleaſure in this town;
And find at laſt, 'tis worth but your half crown.
You'll hear with patience a dull ſcene, to ſee,
In a contented lazy waggery,
The female Montford bare above the knee.
She makes a mighty noiſe, like ſome of you,
Who often talk of what you never do:
She's for all womankind, and awes the town,
As if her huſband's breeches were her own.
She's been to night our hero, though a female,
Shew me but ſuch a whoremaſter, though a male:
Who through many ſhifts, is ſtill the ſame,
Purſues all petticoats, preſerves her fame,
And though ſhe can do nothing keeps the name.
Some of your names are up too we ſuppoſe,
Who turn'd of fifty, ſtill would paſs for beaux:
You dance, you dreſs, you ſing, you keep a noiſe,
And think you're young, becauſe you herd with boys:
To ſuch as you there is no mercy owing;
Your talking muſt not ſerve for your not doing.
And ſince your feeble failings within doors
Are known to us, be wiſe, and even ſcores,
Supply our wants, and we'll conceal all yours.
No matter what you can, or cannot do,
You ſhall cheat others ſtill, if we cheat you:
Keep us but rich, and fine, and we ſhall find
Young lovers, always able to be kind.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Southerne*'s WIVES EXCUSE; or, Cuckolds make Themſelves.

GALLANTS, you're welcome to our homely cheer,
If you have brought your Engliſh ſtomachs here,
We'll treat you, as the French ſay, *chere entire.*
And what we want of humour, or of wit,
Make up with your ſhe-neighbours in the pit;
For on the ſtage, what e'er we do, or ſay,
The vizard maſks can ſhow you better play:
With all our pains, we can but bring 'em in:
'Tis you muſt take the damſels out again:
And when we've brought you kindly thus together,
'Tis your fault if you're parted by foul weather.
We hope theſe natural reaſons may produce,
In every whoremaſter, a kind excuſe
For all our faults, the poet's, and the players,
You'll pardon ours, if you can find out theirs. [*To the maſkers.*
But to the gentler men, who love at ſight,
And never care to come to cloſer fight,
We have provided work for them to night.
With ſafety they may draw their cannon down,
And into a ſurrender bomb the town.
From both ſides-boxes play their batteries;
And not a bullet ſhot, but burning eyes:
Thoſe they diſcharge with ſuch ſucceſsful arts,
They fire, three deep, into the ladies hearts.
Since each man here finds his diverſion,
Let not the damning of our play be one.
But to the ladies who muſt ſet it out,
To hear us prate, and ſee the oglers ſhoot,

Begging their favour, we have this to ſay,
In hopes of their protection for the play,
Here is a muſick-meeting every day.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

In the Character of Mrs. *Friendall.*

MY character, not being much in vogue,
Has drawn me in to ſpeak the Epilogue:
But, pray conceive me right, not to diſparage
That ancient, Engliſh perquiſite of marriage;
Which, when the prieſts firſt made all pleaſure ſin,
Faſter than they could cheat us, drew us in
With rites and liberties of cuckolding.
That us'd to be the cuſtom, and ſo common,
No girl but wiſh'd herſelf a marry'd woman.
Whether I've done my huſband right, or no;
Moſt women may be in the right, that do:
Our Author does not ſet up for reforming,
Or giving hints to fools who won't take warning:
He's pleas'd, that other people are pleas'd too,
To help to reap that harveſt which they ſow:
For among all the cuckolds of this town,
Who ſhow themſelves, and are as daily ſhown,
Our poets may make ſome of 'em their own.
You find in me what may excuſe a Wife:
Compare at home the picture with the life,
And moſt of you may find a Friendall there;
And moſt of you more juſtly us'd than here:
Our Author has his ends, if he can ſhow,
The women ne'er want cauſe for what they do:
For, ladies, all his aim is pleaſing you.

Some mettl'd ſparks, who nothing can withſtand,
Your velvet-fortune-hunters, may demand,
Why, when the means were in the lady's hand,
The huſband civil, and the lover near,
No more was made of the Wife's character?
Damn me, cries one, had I been Betterton,
And ſtruts, and cocks, I know what I'd have done;
She ſhould not ha' got clear of me ſo ſoon.
You only fear ſuch plays may ſpoil your game:
But fleſh and frailty always are the ſame:
And we ſhall ſtill proceed in our old way,
For all that you can do, or poets ſay.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Southerne*'s MAID'S LAST PRAYER.

THEY who muſt write (for writing's a diſeaſe)
Shou'd make it their whole ſtudy how to pleaſe:
And that's a thing our Author fain would do;
But wiſer men, than he, muſt tell him how:
For you're ſo changeable, that every moon,
Some upſtart whimſy knocks the old ones down.
Sometimes bluff heroes pleaſe by dint of arms:
And ſometimes tender nonſenſe has its charms:
Now love, and honour ſtrut in buſkin'd verſe:
Then, at one leap, you ſtumble into farce.
Like true fanaticks, never long content
With any ſettled form of government:
Eager in choice, as eager in forſaking;
You firſt blaſpheme the gods of your own making.
Let poets henceforth lay their rules aſide;
And take ſome ruling planet for their guide;

No more frequent their fam'd Parnaſſus' tops;
Unleſs it be to place their teleſcopes:
For ſuch as hope to merit your eſteem,
Muſt quit their Horace, and erect a ſcheme.
Thus they may find a way to pleaſe the pit,
Provided they inſure their plays from wit.
Our author, this way doubtful of ſucceſs,
(For ſome men have no ſtars, as Lilly ſays)
Himſelf and play upon the boxes throws,
From perfect beauties, to imperfect beaux.
To you, fair ſirs, (for I muſt call you ſo
Since art, in ſpite of nature, makes a beau)
Who in ſide-box, in ſeeming judgment ſit,
Like barren-tell-clocks to attend the pit;
In all humility he does ſubmit.
Not that he needs to doubt you for his play:
We know your courage lies another way.
Nor will he court you like ſome ſervile elves,
Who flatter you as much, as you yourſelves:
Let them proclaim the conqueſts of your looks;
That bug-bear word ſhall never burn his books.
You, ladies, he adores, and owns your charms,
More powerful, than the greateſt monarchs arms.
Hopes the kind heav'ns will all your wiſhes grant,
Whether they be for huſband, or gallant:
Nay, Bath, and Wells, at once, if both you want.
Not doubting your good-nature for a man,
Who, to oblige you, does the beſt he can.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

SEE the effects of a poor Maid's Laſt Pray'r,
Driv'n by meer want of huſband to deſpair.
And ladies, in a barren age as this is,
'Tis hard for all of us to have our wiſhes.
She, for a time pretended to a wit;
And yet you ſee her project would not hit:
Let her example teach you; there's no urging
Theſe ſparks, to take an antiquated virgin:
They fear the growing cares of marry'd lives,
And venture — only on their neighbours' wives.
Be wiſe in time, ſet not too great a value
On your fine ſelves, and ſtill ſtand, ſhall I, ſhall I.
For while the dreams of coach and ſix deceive you,
The honeſt ſquire, deſpis'd, may chance to leave you:
And when poor maids are driv'n to petition,
We ſeldom find they better their condition:
Yet thus with ſome of you it daily happens,
You loſe the beaſt, in hopes to get the trappings.
You ſcorn to ſtoop below a top gallant;
And all pretend to ride the elephant:
As if you had forgot the thing you want.
Though each loſt hour you paſs a fiery trial,
And ne'er refuſe without a ſelf-denial.
Led by the cuſtom of the ſex, you ſtrive
To blind the world, while you yourſelves deceive:
You may pretend a nice indifference;
But truth muſt ſtill be truth, while ſenſe is ſenſe:
Diſguiſe your inclinations as you can:
Yet every woman's buſineſs is a man.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Southerne*'s FATAL MARRIAGE.

WHEN once a poet ſettles an ill name,
Let him write well, or ill, 'tis all the ſame:
For criticks now-a-days, like flocks of ſheep,
All follow, when the firſt has made the leap.
And, do you juſtice, moſt are well inclin'd
To cenſure faults you know not how to find:
Some cavil at the ſtile, and ſome the actors;
For, right or wrong, we paſs for malefactors.
Some well-bred perſons carp at the decorum,
As if they bore the drawing-room before 'em.
Sometimes your ſoft reſpectful ſpark diſcovers,
Our ladies are too coming to their lovers;
For they who ſtill purſue, but ne'er enjoy,
In every caſe expect a Siege of Troy.
There are ſome others too who offer battle,
And with their time, and place, maul Ariſtotle,
Aſk what they mean, and after ſome grimace,
They tell you, twelve's the time; and for the place,
The chocolate-houſe, at the looking-glaſs.
To pleaſe ſuch judges, ſome have tir'd their brains,
And almoſt had their labours for their pains:
After a twelve-month vainly ſpent in plotting,
Theſe mettled criticks cry 'tis good for nothing;
But wiſer authors turn their plots upon you,
And plot to purpoſe when they get your money.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

NOW tell me, when you ſaw the Lady die,
Were you not puzzled for a reaſon why?
A buxom damſel, and of play-houſe race,
Not to out-live th' enjoyment of a brace:
Were that the only marriage-curſe in ſtore,
How many would compound to ſuffer more,
And yet live on, with comfort, to threeſcore?
But on our exits there is no relying:
We women are ſo whimſical in dying.
Some pine away for loſs of ogling fellows:
Nay ſome have dy'd for love, as ſtories tell us.
Some, ſay our hiſtories, though long ago,
For having undergone a rape, or ſo,
Plung'd the fell dagger, without more ado.
But time has laugh'd thoſe follies out of faſhion:
And ſure they'll never gain the approbation
Of ladies, who conſult their reputation.
For if a rape muſt be eſteem'd a curſe,
Grim death, and publication make it worſe.
Should the opinion of the world be try'd,
They'll ſcarce give judgment on the plaintiff's ſide,
For all muſt own, 'tis moſt egregious nonſenſe,
To die for being pleas'd, with a ſafe conſcience.
Nay, look not on your fans, nor turn away,
For tell me, ladies, why do you marry, pray?
But to enjoy your wiſhes, as you may.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Southerne*'s OROONOKO; or, The Royal Slave.

AS when in hoſtile times two neighbouring ſtates
Strive by themſelves, and their confederates;
The war at firſt is made with awkward ſkill,
And ſoldiers clumſily each other kill,
'Till time at length their untaught fury tames,
And into rules their heedleſs rage reclaims:
Then every ſcience by degrees is made
Subſervient to the man-deſtroying trade:
Wit, wiſdom, reading, obſervation, art;
A well-turn'd head to guide a generous heart.
So it may prove with our contending ſtages,
If you will kindly but ſupply their wages:
Which you with eaſe may furniſh, by retrenching
Your ſuperfluities of wine and wenching.
Who'd grudge to ſpare from riot and hard drinking,
To lay it out on means to mend his thinking?
To follow ſuch advice you ſhould have leiſure,
Since what refines your ſenſe, refines your pleaſure:
Women grown tame by uſe each fool can get,
But cuckolds all are made by men of wit.
To virgin favours fools have no pretence:
For maidenheads were made for men of ſenſe.
'Tis not enough to have a horſe well bred,
To ſhew his mettle, he muſt be well fed:
Nor is it all in provender and breed,
He muſt be try'd and ſtrain'd, to mend his ſpeed:
A favour'd poet, like a pamper'd horſe,
Will ſtrain his eye-balls out to win the courſe.

Do you but in your wiſdoms vote it fit
To yield due ſuccours to this war of wit,
The buſkin with more grace ſhall tread the ſtage,
Love ſigh in ſofter ſtrains, heroes leſs rage:
Satyr ſhall ſhew a triple row of teeth,
And Comedy ſhall laugh your fops to death:
Wit ſhall refine, and Pegaſus ſhall foam,
And ſoar in ſearch of ancient Greece and Rome.
And ſince the nation's in the conquering fit,
As you by arms, we'll vanquiſh France in wit:
The work were over, cou'd our poets write
With half the ſpirit that our ſoldiers fight.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame. By Mr. *Congreve.*

YOU ſee we try all ſhapes, and ſhifts, and arts,
To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts.
We weep, and laugh, join mirth and grief together,
Like rain and ſunſhine mixt, in April weather.
Your different taſtes divide our poet's cares:
One foots the ſock, t'other the buſkin wears:
Thus while he ſtrives to pleaſe, he's forc'd to do't,
Like Volſcius, hip-hop, in a ſingle boot.
Criticks, he knows, for this may damn his books:
But he makes feaſts for friends, and not for cooks.
Though errant-knight of late no favour find,
Sure you will be to ladies-errant kind.
To follow fame, knights-errant make profeſſion:
We damſels fly, to ſave our reputation:
So they, their valour ſhew, we our diſcretion.

To lands of monſters, and fierce beaſts, they go:
We, to thoſe iſlands, where rich huſbands grow:
Tho' they're no monſters, we may make 'em ſo.
If they're of Engliſh growth, they'll bear't with patience:
But ſave us from a ſpouſe of Oroonoko's nations!
Then bleſs your ſtars, you happy London wives,
Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives;
Nor envy poor Imoinda's doating blindneſs,
Who thought her huſband kill'd her out of kindneſs.
Death with a huſband ne'er had ſhewn ſuch charms,
Had ſhe once dy'd within a lover's arms.
Her error was from ignorance proceeding:
Poor ſoul! ſhe wanted ſome of our town-breeding.
Forgive this Indian's fondneſs of her ſpouſe;
Their law no chriſtian liberty allows:
Alas! they make a conſcience of their vows!
If virtue in a heathen be a fault,
Then d—n the heathen-ſchool, where ſhe was taught.
She might have learn'd to cuckold, jilt, and ſham,
Had Covent-Garden been in Surinam.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *T. Southerne's* FATE of CAPUA.

Written by the Honourable *Charles Boyle*, Eſquire.

OUR bard reſolv'd to quit this wicked town,
And all poetick offices lay down:
But the weak brother was drawn in again,
And a caſt miſtreſs tempted him to ſin.
Thus many a cautious gallant in this throng,
May wed, when old, whom he debauch'd when young.

Thus the repenting fair ones vow in vain
From cards, from love, from ſcandal to refrain;
For, Eaſter over, they relapſe again.
To write well's hard: But I appeal to y' all,
Is't not much harder not to write at all?
Some men muſt write, for writing's their diſeaſe,
And every poet's ſure one man to pleaſe.
Some meddling coxcombs rather than ſit ſtill,
And perfectly do nothing, muſt do ill.
Some are with buſy dulneſs ſo o'er-run,
They ſeem deſign'd by heav'n to teaze the town.
Yet when theſe fools have ſpawn'd ſome ſickly play,
We have ſo many greater fools than they,
They'll pack a crouded audience the third day.
This poet has no ſly inveigling arts:
He'll try to gain, but he'll not ſteal your hearts.
His muſe is ruſtick, and perhaps too plain,
The men of ſqueamiſh taſtes to entertain:
Who none but dutcheſſes will deign to toaſt,
And favours only from front boxes boaſt.
That's all grimace: When appetites are good,
Be the dreſs coarſe, the air and manners rude,
You can take up with wholeſome fleſh and blood.
But he deſpairs of pleaſing all the nation,
'Tis ſo debauch'd with whims of reformation,
H'has done his beſt: Here is no wanton ſcene
To give the wicked joy, the godly, ſpleen.
Not one poor bawdy jeſt ſhall dare appear;
For now the batter'd veteran ſtrumpets, here
Pretend at leaſt to bring a modeſt ear.
Here is ſome love, 'tis true, ſome noiſe, ſome war,
Enough to pleaſe the Belles, the Beaux to ſcare.
Some buſtling patriots too, ſome rabble-rout,
And Senators of the weak ſide thrown out.

But in all this here's nothing can offend,
Nothing to loſe one ancient midnight friend:
He hopes then, when his cauſe comes on, they'll all attend.
Let critick foes remember 'tis paſt Lent,
And all good chriſtian curſes then were ſpent.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by Colonel *Codrington*.

POETS fine titles for themſelves may find,
I think 'em the fool-mongers of mankind.
The charitable quacks indeed pretend,
They trade in fools, only thoſe fools to mend.
Yet they wou'd ſcarce the nauſeous taſk endure,
But that, like Bedlam-doctors, they are ſure
To get, by ſhowing fools they cannot cure.
Equal in this, all plays muſt be confeſt;
Fool is the fav'rite diſh of the whole feaſt.
In Farce, the wit's a fool, or fool's a wit.
In Comedy the beau pretends a right.
But tragick writers ſtill agree to plot
The greateſt heroe, for the greateſt ſot.
Our bard t' indulge your taſte with vaſt delight,
Serv'd up a ſenate full of fools to night:
Some buſtled hard for Hannibal, and ſome
Wou'd venture all the brains they had for Rome.
Thus fighting fools ſupport ambitious knaves:
Whoe'er prevail'd, the Capuans ſtill were ſlaves.
Our pair of friends ſhine far above the reſt,
With double ſhare of fool and heroe bleſt.

Our lover wou'd not tempt the lady's honour ;
Yet had he boldly puſh'd, and fairly won her,
You'll all allow, he wou'd leſs harm have done her.
Joys well contriv'd are had at eaſier price.
Thank heav'n, our Britiſh friends are not ſo nice.
Our moſt important fool is ſtill behind !
The man was marry'd, ſirs, and ſick in mind.
'Twas a meer whim of honour coſt his life.
The ſqueamiſh Capuan wou'd not ſhare his wife.
Why wives are wives ; And he that will be billing,
Muſt not think cuckoldom deſerves a killing.
What if the gentle creature had been kiſſing,
Nothing the good man marry'd for, was miſſing.
Beſides, the rights of ladies ſacred are :
He ſhou'd have been content with neighbours fare.
But ſhe, by her coy gallant's crime, was good,
And was not won, becauſe ſhe was not woo'd.
Had he the ſecret of his birth-right known,
'Tis odds the faithful annáls wou'd have ſhown,
The wives of half this race, more lucky than his own.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *T. Southerne*'s SPARTAN DAME.

Written by Mr. *Fenton*.

WHEN realms are ravag'd with invaſive foes,
Each boſom with heroick ardor glows ;
Old chiefs, reflecting on their former deeds,
Diſdain to ruſt with batter'd invalids ;
But active in the foremoſt ranks appear,
And leave young ſmock-fac'd beaux to guard the rear.

So, to repel the Vandals of the ſtage,
Our vet'ran bard reſumes his tragic rage:
He throws the gauntlet Otway us'd to wield,
And calls for Engliſhmen to judge the field:
Thus arm'd to reſcue nature from diſgrace,
Meſſieurs! lay down your minſtrells, and grimace:
The brawnieſt youths of Troy the combat fear'd,
When old Entellus in the liſts appear'd.
Yet what avails the champion's giant ſize,
When Pigmies are made umpires of the prize?
Your fathers (men of ſenſe, and honeſt bowlers)
Diſdain'd the mummery of foreign ſtrollers:
By their examples wou'd you form your taſte,
The preſent age might emulate the paſt.
We hop'd that art and genius had ſecur'd you;
But ſoon facetious Harlequin allur'd you:
The muſes bluſh'd to ſee their friends exalting,
Thoſe elegant delights of jig, and vaulting:
So charm'd you were, you ceas'd awhile to doat
On nonſenſe, gargled in an Eunuch's throat.
All pleas'd to hear the chatt'ring monſters ſpeak,
As old wives wonder at the parſon's greek.
Such light ragouts and muſhrooms may be good,
To whet your appetites for wholſome food:
But the bold Briton ne'er in earneſt dines
Without ſubſtantial haunches and ſurloins.
In wit, as well as war, they give us vigour;
Creſſy was loſt by kickſhaws and ſoup-meagre.
Inſtead of light deſerts, and luſcious froth,
Our poet treats to-night with Spartan-broth;
To which, as well as all his former feaſts,
The ladies are the chief-invited gueſts.
Crown'd with a kind of Glaſſenbury bays,
That bloom amid the winter of his days.

He comes, ambitious in his green decline,
To conſecrate his wreath at beauty's ſhrine.
His Oroonoko never fail'd t' engage
The radiant circles of the former age:
Each boſom heav'd, all eyes were ſeen to flow,
And ſympathize with Iſabella's woe:
But fate reſerv'd, to crown his elder fame,
The brighteſt audience for the Spartan Dame.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by Major *Richardſon Pack.*

OUR author's muſe a numerous iſſue boaſts,
And many of the daughters have been toaſts.
She who now laſt appears upon the ſtage,
(The hopes and joy of his declining age)
With modeſt fears, a cens'ring world to ſhun,
Retir'd awhile, and liv'd conceal'd a Nun.
At length, releas'd from that reſtraint, the dame
Truſts to the town her fortune, and her fame.
Abſence, and time, have loſt her many friends,
But this bright circle makes her large amends.
To you, fair judges, ſhe ſubmits her cauſe;
Nor doubts, if you approve, the mens applauſe.
Some ſullen formal rogue perhaps may lour,
(Rebel to female, as to royal pow'r)
But all the gay, the gallant, and the great,
On beauty's ſtandard with ambition wait.
Glory is vain, where love has had no part;
The poſt of honour is a woman's heart.

Ev'n chains are ornaments, that you beſtow;
The more your ſlaves, the prouder ſtill we grow.
Man, a rough creature, ſavage form'd and rude,
By you to gentler manners is ſubdu'd:
In the ſweet habitude we grow refin'd,
And poliſh ſtrength with elegance of mind.
Our ſex may repreſent the bolder pow'rs;
The graces, muſes, and the virtues, yours.
But ah! 'tis pity, that for want of care,
Madmen and fops your bounty ſometimes ſhare,
Wretches in wit's deſpight and nature's born,
Beneath your favour, nay, below your ſcorn.
May poor Celona's wrongs a warning prove,
And teach the fair with dignity to love.
Let wealth ne'er tempt you to abandon ſenſe,
Nor knaves ſeduce you with their grave pretence.
Be vile profaneneſs ever in diſgrace,
And vice abhor'd, as treacherous, and baſe.
Revere yourſelves; and, conſcious of your charms,
Receive no demon to an angel's arms.
Succeſs can then alone your vows attend,
When worth's the motive, conſtancy the end.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Congreve*'s OLD BATCHELOR.

HOW this vile world is chang'd! In former days,
Prologues were ſerious ſpeeches, before Plays;
Grave ſolemn things, as graces are to feaſts;
Where poets begg'd a bleſſing from their gueſts.
But now, no more like Suppliants we come,
A Play makes war, and Prologue is the drum.

Arm'd with keen ſatire, and with pointed wit,
We threaten you who do for judges ſit,
To ſave our Plays, or elſe we'll damn your Pit.
But for your comfort it falls out to-day,
We've a young author, and his firſt-born play;
So, ſtanding only on his good behaviour,
He's very civil and intreats your favour.
Not but the man has malice, wou'd he ſhow it,
But on my conſcience he's a baſhful poet;
You think that ſtrange——no matter, he'll outgrow it.
Well, I'm his advocate——by me he prays you,
(I don't know whether I ſhall ſpeak to pleaſe you)
He prays——O bleſs me! what ſhall I do now!
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!
And 'twas the prettieſt Prologue as he wrote it!
Well, the deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.
O Lord, for heaven's ſake excuſe the play,
Becauſe, you know, if it be damn'd to-day,
I ſhall be hang'd for wanting what to ſay.
For my ſake then——but I'm in ſuch confuſion,
I cannot ſtay to hear your reſolution.

[Runs off.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

AS a raſh girl who will all hazards run,
And be enjoy'd, though ſure to be undone;
Soon as her curioſity is over,
Would give the world ſhe could her toy recover:
So fares it with our poet; and I'm ſent
To tell you, he already does repent:
Would you were all as forward to keep Lent.

Now the deed's done, the giddy-thing has leiſure
To think o'th' the ſting, that's in the tail of pleaſure.
Methinks I hear him in conſideration!
What will the world ſay? where's my reputation?
Now that's at ſtake——No, fool, 'tis out o'faſhion.
If loſs of that ſhould follow want of wit,
How many undone men were in the Pit!
Why that's ſome comfort to an Author's fears,
If he's an Aſs, he will be tried by's Peers.
But hold——I am exceeding my commiſſion;
My buſineſs here, was humbly to petition:
But we're ſo us'd to rail on theſe occaſions,
I could not help one trial of your patience:
For 'tis our way (you know) for fear o'th' the worſt,
To be before-hand ſtill, and cry fool firſt.
How ſay you, Sparks? How do you ſtand affected?
I ſwear young Bays within is ſo dejected,
'Twou'd grieve your hearts to ſee him; ſhall I call him?
But then you cruel critics would ſo maul him!
Yet, may be, you'll encourage a beginner;
But how?——Juſt as the devil does a ſinner.
Women and wits are us'd e'en much at one,
You gain your ends, and damn 'em when you've done.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Congreve*'s DOUBLE DEALER.

MOORS have this way (as ſtory tells) to know
Whether their brats are truly got, or no;
Into the ſea the new-born babe is thrown,
There, as inſtinct directs, to ſwim, or drown.
A barbarous device, to try if ſpouſe
Has kept religiouſly her nuptial vows.

Such are the trials, Poets make of Plays:
Only they truſt to more inconſtant ſeas;
So does our Author, this his Child commit
To the tempeſtuous mercy of the pit,
To know if it be truly born a Wit.

Critics avaunt; for you are fiſh of prey,
And feed, like ſharks, upon an infant Play.
Be ev'ry monſter of the deep away;
Let's a fair trial have, and a clear ſea.

Let nature work, and do not damn too ſoon,
For life will ſtruggle long, ere it ſink down:
And will at leaſt riſe thrice, before it drown.
Let us conſider, had it been our fate,
Thus hardly to be prov'd legitimate!
I will not ſay, we'd all in danger been,
Were each to ſuffer for his mother's ſin:
But by my troth I cannot avoid thinking,
How nearly ſome good men might have 'ſcap'd ſinking.
But, Heav'n be prais'd, this cuſtom is confin'd
Alone to th' offspring of the Muſes kind:
Our chriſtian cuckolds are more bent to pity;
I know not one Moor-huſband in the city.
I'th' good man's arms the chopping baſtard thrives,
For he thinks all his own, that is his wife's.

Whatever fate is for this Play deſign'd,
The Poet's ſure he ſhall ſome comfort find:
For if his muſe has play'd him falſe, the worſt
That can befal him, is, to be divorc'd;
You huſbands judge, if that be to be curs'd.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

COU'D Poets but foreſee how Plays wou'd take,
Then they cou'd tell what Epilogues to make;
Whether to thank or blame their audience moſt:
But that late knowledge does much hazard coſt:
'Till dice are thrown, there's nothing won, nor loſt.
So 'till the thief has ſtol'n, he cannot know
Whether he ſhall eſcape the law, or no.
But Poets run much greater hazards far,
Than they who ſtand their trials at the bar;
The law provides a curb for its own fury,
And ſuffers judges to direct the jury.
But in this court, what diff'rence does appear!
For every one's both judge and jury here;
Nay, and what's worſe, an executioner.
All have a right and title to ſome part,
Each chooſing that in which he has moſt art.
The dreadful men of learning all confound,
Unleſs the fable's good, and moral ſound.
The vizor-maſks that are in Pit and Gallery,
Approve, or damn, the Repartee and Rallery.
The lady critics, who are better read,
Enquire if characters are nicely bred;
If the ſoft things are penn'd and ſpoke with grace:
They judge of action too, and time, and place;
In which we do not doubt but they're diſcerning,
For that's a kind of Aſſignation Learning.
Beaux judge of dreſs; the witlings judge of ſongs;
The cuckoldom, of ancient right, to cits belongs.

Poor poets thus the favour are deny'd,
Even to make exceptions when they're try'd.
'Tis hard that they muſt ev'ry one admit:
Methinks I ſee ſome faces in the Pit,
Which muſt of conſequence be foes to wit.
You who can judge, to ſentence may proceed;
But tho' he cannot write, let him be freed
At leaſt from their contempt, who cannot read.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Congreve*'s LOVE for LOVE.

Spoken at the Opening of the New-Houſe.

THE huſbandman in vain renews his toil,
To cultivate each year a hungry ſoil;
And fondly hopes for rich and generous fruit,
When what ſhou'd feed the tree, devours the root:
Th' unladen boughs, he ſees, bode certain dearth,
Unleſs tranſplanted to more kindly earth.
So, the poor huſbands of the ſtage, who found
Their labours loſt upon ungrateful ground,
This laſt and only remedy have prov'd;
And hope new fruit from ancient ſtocks remov'd.
Well may they hope, when you ſo kindly aid,
Well plant a ſoil which you ſo rich have made.
As nature gave the world to man's firſt age,
So from your bounty, we receive this ſtage;
The freedom man was born to you've reſtor'd,
And to our world ſuch plenty you afford,
It ſeems like Eden, fruitful of it's own accord.
But ſince in Paradiſe frail fleſh gave way,
And when but two were made, both went aſtray;

Forbear your wonder, and the fault forgive,
If in our larger family we grieve,
One falling Adam, and one tempted Eve.
We who remain, would gratefully repay,
What our endeavours can, and bring this day
The firſt-fruit offering of a virgin Play.
We hope there's ſomething that may pleaſe each taſte,
And tho' of homely fare we make the feaſt,
Yet you will find variety at leaſt.
There's Humour which for chearful friends we got,
And for the thinking party there's a Plot.
We've ſomething too, to gratify ill nature,
(If there be any here) and that is Satire.
Tho' ſatire ſcarce dares grin, 'tis grown ſo mild,
Or only ſhews its teeth, as if it ſmil'd.
As aſſes thiſtles, poets mumble wit,
And dare not bite, for fear of being bit.
They hold their pens, as ſwords are held by fools,
And are afraid to uſe their own edge-tools.
Since the Plain-Dealer's ſcenes of manly rage,
Not one has dar'd to laſh this crying age.
This time, the poet owns the bold eſſay,
Yet hopes there's no ill-manners in his play:
And he declares by me, he has deſign'd
Affront to none, but frankly ſpeaks his mind.
And ſhou'd th' enſuing ſcenes not chance to hit,
He offers but this one excuſe,——'twas writ
Before your late encouragement of wit.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

SURE providence at firſt deſign'd this place
To be the player's refuge in diſtreſs;
For ſtill in every ſtorm, they all run hither,
As to a ſhed, that ſhields 'em from the weather.
But thinking of this change which laſt befell us,
It's like what I have heard our poets tell us:
For when behind our ſcenes their ſuits are pleading,
To help their love, ſometimes they ſhew their reading;
And wanting ready caſh to pay for hearts,
They top their learning on us, and their parts.
Once of philoſophers they told us ſtories,
Whom, as I think, they call'd—Py—Pythagories,
I'm ſure 'tis ſome ſuch Latin name they give 'em,
And we, who know no better, muſt believe 'em.
Now to theſe men (ſay they) ſuch ſouls were giv'n,
That after death, ne'er went to hell, nor heav'n,
But liv'd, I know not how, in beaſts; and then
When many years were paſt, in men again.
Methinks we Players reſemble ſuch a ſoul!
That does from bodies, we from houſes ſtrole.
Thus Ariſtotle's ſoul, of old that was,
May now be damn'd to animate an Aſs;
Or in this very houſe, for ought we know,
Is doing painful penance in ſome Beau:
And thus, our audience, which did once reſort
To ſhining theatres to ſee our ſport,
Now find us toſs'd into a Tennis-court.
Theſe walls but t'other day were fill'd with noiſe,
Of roaring gameſters, and your Damme Boys;

Then bounding balls and rackets they encompaſt,
And now they're fill'd with jeſts, and flights, and bombaſt!
I vow, I don't much like this tranſmigration,
Strolling from place to place, by circulation;
Grant heav'n we don't return to our firſt ſtation.
I know not what theſe think, but for my part,
I can't reflect without an aking heart,
How we ſhould end in our original, a cart.
But we can't fear, ſince you're ſo good to ſave us,
That you have only ſet us up, to leave us.
Thus from the paſt, we hope for future grace,
I beg it ——
And ſome here know I have a begging face.
Then pray continue this your kind behaviour,
For a clear ſtage won't do, without your favour.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Congreve*'s MOURNING BRIDE.

THE time has been when Plays were not ſo plenty,
And a leſs number new would well content ye.
New plays did then like Almanacks appear;
And one was thought ſufficient for a year:
Tho' they are more like Almanacks of late;
For in one year, I think, they're out of date.
Nor were they without reaſon join'd together;
For juſt as one prognoſticates the weather,
How plentiful the crop, or ſcarce the grain,
What peals of thunder, and what ſhow'rs of rain:
So t'other can foretell, by certain rules,
What crops of coxcombs, or what floods of fools.
In ſuch like prophecies were poets ſkill'd,
Which now they find in their own tribe fulfill'd:

The dearth of wit they did ſo long preſage,
Is fall'n on us, and almoſt ſtarves the Stage.
Were you not griev'd, as often as you ſaw
Poor actors thraſh ſuch empty ſheafs of ſtraw?
Toiling and lab'ring at their lungs expence,
To ſtart a jeſt, or force a little ſenſe.
Hard fate for us! ſtill harder in th' event;
Our authors ſin, but we alone repent.
Still they proceed, and, at our charge, write worſe;
'Twere ſome amends if they could reimburſe:
But there's the devil, tho' their cauſe is loſt,
There's no recovering damages or coſt.
Good wits, forgive this liberty we take,
Since cuſtom gives the loſers leave to ſpeak.
But if, provok'd, your dreadful wrath remains,
Take you revenge upon the coming Scenes:
For that damn'd Poet's ſpar'd who damns a brother,
As one thief 'ſcapes that executes another.
Thus far alone does to the wits relate;
But from the reſt we hope a better fate.
To pleaſe and move has been our Poet's theme,
Art may direct, but nature is his aim;
And, nature miſs'd, in vain he boaſts his art,
For only nature can affect the heart.
Then freely judge the Scenes that ſhall enſue,
But as with freedom, judge with candour too.
He wou'd not loſe, thro' prejudice, his cauſe;
Nor wou'd obtain precariouſly applauſe.
Impartial cenſure he requeſts from all,
Prepar'd by juſt decrees to ſtand or fall.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

THE Tragedy thus done, I am, you know,
No more a Princeſs, but in *ſtatu quo:*
And now as unconcern'd this mourning wear,
As if indeed a widow, or an heir.
I've leiſure, now, to mark your ſev'ral faces,
And know each Critic by his ſour grimaces.
To poiſon plays, I ſee them where they ſit,
Scatter'd, like rats-bane, up and down the pit;
While others watch like pariſh ſearchers, hir'd
To tell of what diſeaſe the Play expir'd.
O with what joy they run, to ſpread the news
Of a damn'd Poet, and departed Muſe!
But if he 'ſcape, with what regret they're ſeiz'd!
And how they're diſappointed when they're pleas'd!
Critics to Plays for the ſame end reſort,
That ſurgeons wait on trials in a court;
For innocence condemn'd they've no reſpect,
Provided they've a body to diſſect.
As Suſſex men that dwell upon the ſhore,
Look out when ſtorms ariſe, and billows roar,
Devoutly praying, with uplifted hands,
That ſome well-laden ſhip may ſtrike the ſands;
To whoſe rich cargo they may make pretence,
And fatten on the ſpoils of providence:
So Critics throng to ſee a new Play ſplit,
And thrive and proſper on the wrecks of wit.
Small hope our Poet from theſe proſpects draws;
And therefore to the Fair commends his cauſe.

Your tender hearts to mercy are inclin'd,
With whom, he hopes, this Play will favour find,
Which was an off'ring to the ſex deſign'd.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Congreve*'s WAY of the WORLD.

OF thoſe few fools, who with ill ſtars are curſt,
Sure ſcribling fools, call'd Poets, fare the worſt:
For they're a ſort of fools which Fortune makes,
And after ſhe has made them fools, forſakes.
With Nature's oafs 'tis quite a diff'rent caſe,
For Fortune favours all her Idiot Race:
In the jay's neſt the Cuckow Eggs we find,
O'er which ſhe broods to hatch the Changeling-Kind.
No portion for her own ſhe has to ſpare,
So much ſhe dotes on her adopted care.

Poets are bubbles, by the town drawn in,
Suffer'd at firſt ſome trifling ſtakes to win:
But what unequal hazards do they run!
Each time they write they venture all they've won:
The ſquire that's butter'd ſtill, is ſure to be undone.
This Author, heretofore, has found your favour,
But pleads no merit from his paſt behaviour.
To build on that might prove a vain preſumption,
Shou'd grants to Poets made, admit reſumption:
And in Parnaſſus he muſt loſe his ſeat,
If that be found a forfeited eſtate.

He owns, with toil, he wrought the following ſcenes,
But if they're naught ne'er ſpare him for his pains:
Damn him the more; have no commiſeration
For dulneſs on mature deliberation.

He ſwears he'll not reſent one hiſs'd-off ſcene,
Nor, like thoſe peeviſh wits, his Play maintain,
Who, to aſſert their ſenſe, your taſte arraign.
Some plot we think he has, and ſome new thought;
Some humour too, no farce; but that's a fault.
Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
For ſo reform'd a town who dares correct?
To pleaſe, this time, has been his ſole pretence,
He'll not inſtruct, leſt it ſhould give offence.
Shou'd he by chance a knave or fool expoſe,
That hurts none here; ſure here are none of thoſe.
In ſhort, our Play ſhall (with your leave to ſhew it)
Give you one inſtance of a paſſive Poet,
Who to your judgments yields all reſignation;
So ſave or damn, after your own diſcretion.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

AFTER our Epilogue this croud diſmiſſes,
I'm thinking how this Play'll be pull'd to pieces.
But pray conſider, ere you doom its fall,
How hard a thing 'twou'd be, to pleaſe you all.
There are ſome Criticks ſo with ſpleen diſeas'd,
They ſcarcely come inclining to be pleas'd:
And ſure he muſt have more than mortal ſkill,
Who pleaſes any one againſt his will.
Then all bad Poets we are ſure are foes,
And how their number's ſwell'd the town well knows.
In ſhoals, I've mark'd 'em judging in the Pit;
Tho' they're on no pretence for judgment fit,
But that they have been damn'd for want of wit.

Since when, they by their own offences taught,
Set up for ſpies on Plays, and finding fault.
Others there are whoſe malice we'd prevent;
Such, who watch Plays with ſcurrilous intent,
To mark out who by Characters are meant.
And tho' no perfect likeneſs they can trace,
Yet each pretends to know the copy'd face.
Theſe with falſe gloſſes feed their own ill-nature,
And turn to Libel, what was meant a Satire.
May ſuch malicious Fops this fortune find,
To think themſelves alone the Fools deſign'd:
If any are ſo arrogantly vain,
To think they ſingly can ſupport a Scene,
And furniſh Fool enough to entertain.
For well the learn'd and the judicious know,
That Satire ſcorns to ſtoop ſo meanly low,
As any one abſtracted Fop to ſhow.
For, as when painters form a matchleſs face,
They from each Fair-one catch ſome diff'rent grace;
And ſhining features in one portrait blend,
To which no ſingle beauty muſt pretend:
So Poets oft do in one Piece expoſe
Whole Belles Aſſemblées of Coquettes and Beaux.

PROLOGUE by Mr. *Congreve*, To QUEEN MARY,

Upon her Majeſty's coming to ſee the OLD BATCHELOR, after having ſeen the DOUBLE DEALER.

BY this repeated act of grace, we ſee
Wit is again the care of Majeſty;
And while thus honour'd our proud Stage appears,
We ſeem to rival Ancient Theatres.

Thus flouriſh'd wit in our forefathers' age,
And thus the Roman and Athenian Stage.
Whoſe Wit is beſt, we'll not preſume to tell;
But this we know, our Audience will excel:
For never was in Rome, nor Athens, ſeen
So fair a circle, and ſo bright a Queen.
Long has the Muſes' land been over-caſt,
And many rough and ſtormy winters paſt;
Hid from the world, and thrown in ſhades of night,
Of heat depriv'd, and almoſt void of light:
While Wit, a hardy plant, of nature bold,
Has ſtruggled ſtrongly with the killing cold:
So does it ſtill through oppoſition grow,
As if its root was warmer kept by ſnow:
But when ſhot forth, then draws the danger near,
On ev'ry ſide the gath'ring winds appear,
And blaſts deſtroy the fruit, which froſts wou'd ſpare.
But now, new vigour and new life it knows,
And warmth that from this Royal Preſence flows.
O wou'd ſhe ſhine with rays more frequent here!
How gay wou'd, then, this drooping land appear!
Then, like the ſun, with pleaſure ſhe might view
The ſmiling earth, cloth'd by her beams anew.
O'er all the meads, ſhou'd various flowers be ſeen
Mix'd with the the laurel's never-fading green,
The new creation of a Gracious Queen.

EPILOGUE

At the Opening of the QUEEN'S THEATRE in the Hay-market, with an Italian Paſtoral.

Written by Mr. *Congreve*.

WHatever future fate our houſe may find,
At preſent we expect you ſhou'd be kind:
Inconſtancy itſelf can claim no right,
Before enjoyment and the wedding night.
You muſt be fix'd a little ere you range,
You muſt be true 'till you have time to change.
A week at leaſt; one night is ſure too ſoon:
But we pretend not to a honey-moon.
To novelty we know you can be true,
But what, alas! or who, is always new?
This day, without preſumption, we pretend
With novelty entire you're entertain'd;
For not alone our Houſe and Scenes are new,
Our Song and Dance, but ev'n our Actors too.
Our Play itſelf has ſomething in't uncommon,
Two faithful lovers, and one conſtant woman.
In ſweet Italian ſtrains our ſhepherds ſing,
Of harmleſs loves our painted foreſts ring,
In notes, perhaps leſs foreign than the thing.
To ſound and ſhew at firſt we make pretence,
In time we may regale you with ſome ſenſe,
But that, at preſent, were too great expence.
We only for the beaux may think it hard,
To be to-night from ſmutty jeſts debarr'd:
But in good breeding, ſure, they'll once excuſe
Ev'n modeſty, when in a Stranger muſe.

The day's at hand, when we ſhall ſhift the ſcene,
And to yourſelves ſhew your dear ſelves again.
Paint the reverſe of what you've ſeen to-day,
And in bold ſtrokes the vicious town diſplay.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Hopkins*'s PYRRHUS King of EPIRUS.

Written by Mr. *Congreve*.

OUR age has much improv'd the warrior's art;
For fighting, now, is thought the weakeſt part;
And a good head more uſeful than a heart.
This way of war, does our example yield;
That ſtage will win, which longeſt keeps the field.
We mean not battle, when we bid defiance;
But ſtarving one another to compliance.
Our troops encamp'd are by each other view'd,
And thoſe which firſt are hungry, are ſubdu'd.
And there, in truth, depends the great deciſion:
They conquer, who cut off the foe's proviſion.
Let fools, with knocks and bruiſes, keep a pother;
Our war and trade, is to out-wit each other.
But hold: Will not the politicians tell us,
That both our conduct, and our foreſight fail us,
To raiſe recruits, and draw new forces down,
Thus, in the dead vacation of the town?
To muſter up our rhimes, without our reaſon,
And forage for an audience out of ſeaſon?
Our Author's fears muſt this falſe ſtep excuſe;
'Tis the firſt flight of a juſt-feather'd muſe:
Th' occaſion ta'en, when critics are away;
Half wits and beaux, thoſe rav'nous birds of prey.

But, Heav'n be prais'd, far hence they vent their wrath,
Mauling, in mild lampoon, th' intriguing Bath.
Thus does our Author his firſt flight commence;
Thus, againſt friends at firſt, with foils we fence:
Thus prudent Gimcrack try'd if he were able
(Ere he'd wet foot) to ſwim upon a table.

Then ſpare the youth: or if you'll damn the play,
Let him but firſt have his; then take your day.

PROLOGUE

To the COURT,

On the QUEEN's Birth-Day, 1704.

Written by Mr. *Congreve*.

THE happy muſe, to this high ſcene preferr'd,
Hereafter ſhall in loftier ſtrains be heard;
And ſoaring to tranſcend her uſual theme,
Shall ſing of virtue and heroic fame.
No longer ſhall ſhe toil upon the ſtage,
And friutleſs war with vice and folly wage;
No more in mean diſguiſe ſhe ſhall appear,
And ſhapes ſhe wou'd reform be forc'd to wear:
While ignorance and malice join to blame,
And break the mirror that reflects their ſhame.
Henceforth ſhe ſhall purſue a nobler taſk,
Shew her bright virgin face, and ſcorn the Satyr's maſk.
Happy her future days! which are deſign'd
Alone to paint the beauties of the mind.
By juſt originals to draw with care,
And copy from the court a faultleſs fair:

Such labours with ſucceſs her hopes may crown,
And ſhame to manners an incorrigible town.
While this deſign her eager thought purſues,
Such various virtues all around ſhe views,
She knows not where to fix, or which to chuſe.
Yet ſtill ambitious of the daring flight,
ONE only awes her with ſuperior light.
From that attempt the conſcious muſe retires,
Nor to inimitable worth aſpires;
But ſecretly applauds, and ſilently admires.
Hence ſhe reflects upon the genial ray
That firſt enliven'd this auſpicious day:
On that bright ſtar, to whoſe indulgent pow'r
We owe the bleſſings of the preſent hour.
Concurring omens of propitious fate
Bore, with one ſacred birth, an equal date:
Whence we derive whatever we poſſeſs,
By foreign conqueſt, or domeſtic peace.
Then, Britain, then thy dawn of bliſs begun:
Then broke the morn that lighted up this ſun!
Then was it doom'd whoſe councils ſhould ſucceed;
And by whoſe arm the chriſtian world be freed;
Then the fierce foe was pre-ordain'd to yield,
And then the battle won at Blenheim's glorious field.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Dryden* junior's HUSBAND HIS OWN CUCKOLD.

Written by Mr. CONGREVE.

THIS year has been remarkable two ways,
For blooming Poets, and for blaſted Plays.
We've been by much appearing plenty mock'd,
At once both tantaliz'd, and over-ſtock'd.

Our Authors too, by their ſucceſs of late,
Begin to think Third Days are out of date.
What can the cauſe be, that our plays won't keep,
Unleſs they have a rot ſome years, like ſheep?
For our parts, we confeſs we're quite aſham'd
To read ſuch weekly bills of Poets damn'd.
Each pariſh knows 'tis but a mournful caſe
When chriſtenings fall, and funerals increaſe.
Thus 'tis, and thus 'twill be when we are dead,
There will be writers which will ne'er be read.
Why will you be ſuch wits, and write ſuch things?
You're willing to be waſps, but want the ſtings.
Let not your ſpleen provoke you to that height,
'Odſlife you don't know what you do, ſirs, when you write.
You'll find that Pegaſus has tricks, when try'd,
Tho' you make nothing on't but up and ride;
Ladies and all, i'faith, now get aſtride.
Contriving characters, and ſcenes, and plots,
Is grown as common now, as knitting knots;
With the ſame eaſe, and negligence of thought,
The charming play is writ, and fringe is wrought.
Tho' this be frightful, yet we're more afraid,
When Ladies leave, that Beaus will take the trade:
Thus far 'tis well enough, if here 'twould ſtop,
But ſhou'd they write, we muſt e'en ſhut up ſhop.
How ſhall we make this mode of writing ſink?
A mode, ſaid I? 'Tis a diſeaſe I think,
A ſtubborn tetter that's not cur'd with ink.
For ſtill it ſpreads, 'till each th' infection takes,
And ſeizes ten for one that it forſakes.
Our Play to-day is ſprung from none of theſe,
Nor ſhould you damn it, tho' it does not pleaſe,
Since born without the bounds of your four ſeas.
For if you grant no favonr as 'tis new,
Yet as a ſtranger, there is ſomething due:

From Rome (to try its fate) this play was ſent;
Start not at Rome, for there's no Popery meant;
Tho' there the Poet may his dwelling chuſe,
Yet ſtill he knows his Country claims his Muſe.
Hither an offering his firſt-born he ſends,
Whoſe good or ill ſucceſs on you depends.
Yet he has hope ſome kindneſs may be ſhown,
As due to greater merit than his own,
And begs the Sire may for the Son atone.
There's his laſt refuge, if the Play don't take,
Yet ſpare young Dryden for his father's ſake.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s ALCIBIADES.

NEVER did rhymer greater hazard run,
'Mongſt us by your ſeverity undone:
Tho' we, alas! t' oblige you have done moſt,
And bought you pleaſures at your own ſad coſt:
Yet all our beſt endeavours have been loſt.
So oft a ſtateſman lab'ring to be good,
His honeſty's for treaſon underſtood:
Whilſt ſome falſe flatt'ring minion of the court,
Shall play the traitor, and be honour'd for't.
To you known judges of what's ſenſe and wit,
Our author ſwears he gladly will ſubmit:
But there's a ſort of things infeſt the pit,
That will be witty ſpite of nature too,
And to be thought ſo, haunt and peſter you.
Hither ſometimes thoſe would-be-wits repair,
In queſt of you; where if you not appear,
Cries out——Pugh! damn-me what do we do here?

Strait up he ſtarts, his garniture then puts
In order, ſo he cocks, and out he ſtruts
To th' coffee-houſe, where he about him looks;
Spies friend, cries Jack—I've been to night at th' Dukes:
They, ſilly rogues, are all undone, my dear,
I gad! not one of ſenſe that I ſaw there.
Thus to himſelf he'd reputation gather
Of wit, and good acquaintance, but has neither.
Wit has indeed a ſtranger been of late,
'Mongſt its pretenders nought ſo ſtrange as that.
Both houſes too too long a faſt have known,
That coarſeſt nonſenſe goes moſt glibly down.
Thus tho' this trifler never wrote before,
Yet faith he ventur'd on the common ſcore:
Since nonſenſe is ſo generally allow'd,
He hopes that his may paſs amongſt the crowd.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken in the Character of *Deidamia*.

NOW who ſays Poets don't in blood delight?
'Tis true the varlets care not much to fight;
But faith they claw it off whene'er they write.
Are Bully-Rocks not of the common ſize;
Kill ye men faſter than Domitian flies?
Ours made ſuch havock that the ſilly rogue
Was forc'd to make me riſe for th' Epilogue.
The fop damn'd me, but e'er to hell I go,
I'd very fain be ſatisfy'd if you
Think it not juſt that he were ſerv'd ſo too.

As he hath yours, do you his hopes beguile;
You've been in purgatory all this while.
Then damn him down to hell, and never ſpare;
Perhaps he'll find more favour there than here:
Nay of the two may chuſe the much leſs evil;
If you're but good when pleas'd, ev'n ſo's the devil.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s TITUS and BERENICE, with the CHEATS of SCAPIN.

GALLANTS, our Author met me here to-day,
And begg'd that I'd ſay ſomething for his Play.
You wags, that judge by rote, and damn by rule,
Taking your meaſures from ſome Neighbour Fool,
Who 'as impudence, a coxcomb's uſeful tool; —
That always are ſevere, ye know not why,
And would be thought great criticks by the bye;
With very much ill nature, and no wit,
Juſt as you are, we humbly beg you'd ſit,
And with your ſilly ſelves divert the pit.
You men of ſenſe, who heretofore allow'd
Our author's follies, make him once more proud.
But for the youths that newly 're come from France,
Whoſe heads want ſenſe, whoſe heels abound with dance:
Our author to their judgment won't ſubmit,
But ſwears, that they, who ſo infeſt the pit
With their own follies, ne'er can judge of wit.
'Tis thence he chiefly favour would implore;
[*To the Boxes.*
And, Fair Ones, pray oblige him on my ſcore:
Confine his foes, the fops, within their rules;
For, ladies, you know how to manage fools.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by Mrs. *Mary Lee*, when ſhe was out of humour.

HOW little do you gueſs what I'm to ſay!
I'm not to aſk how you like Farce or Play:
For you muſt know, I've other buſineſs now;
It is to tell ye, ſparks, how we like you.
How happy were we, when in humble guiſe
You came with honeſt hearts and harmleſs eyes;
Sate, without noiſe and tumult in the pit:
Oh what a precious jewel then was Wit!
Tho' now 'tis grown ſo common, let me die,
Gentlemen ſcorn to keep it company.
Indulgent nature has too bounteous been,
Your too much plenty is become your ſin.
Time was ye were as meek as now you're proud,
Did not in curſt cabals of criticks croud,
Nor thought it witty to be very loud;
But came to ſee the follies you would ſhun;
Tho' now ſo fondly antick here you're grown;
T' invert the ſtage's purpoſe, and it's rules;
Make us ſpectators, whilſt you play the fools.
Equally witty, as ſome valiant are;
The ſad defects of both are expos'd here.
For here you'll cenſure, who diſdain to write,
And ſome make quarrels here that ſcorn to fight.
The rugged ſoldier, that from war returns,
And ſtill with th' heat of former action burns;
Let him but hither come to ſee a play,
Proceeds an arrant courtier in a day:

Shall ſteal from th' pit, and fly up to the box,
There hold impertinent chat with tawdry maux:
Till ere aware the bluſt'rer falls in love;
And Hero grows as harmleſs as a Dove.
With us the kind remembrance yet remains,
When we were entertain'd behind our ſcenes.
Tho' now, alas, we muſt your abſence mourn,
Whilſt nought but quality will ſerve your turn.
Damn'd quality; that uſes poaching arts,
And (as 'tis ſaid) comes maſk'd to prey on hearts.
The proper uſe of vizors once was made,
When only worn by ſuch as own'd the trade:
Tho' now all mingle with 'em ſo together,
That you can hardly know the one from t'other.
But 'tis no matter; on, purſue your game,
Till wearied you return at laſt, and tame;
Know then 'twill be our turn to be ſevere;
For when you've left your ſtings behind you there,
You lazy drones, you ſhan't have harbour here.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s FRIENDSHIP in FASHION.

HOW hard a taſk hath that poor drudge of ſtage,
That ſtrives to pleaſe in this fantaſtick age?
It is a thing ſo difficult to hit
That he's a fool that thinks to do't by wit;
Therefore our author bid me plainly ſay,
You muſt not look for any in his play.
I'th' next place, Ladies, there's no bawdy in't,
No not ſo much as one well-meaning hint;
Nay more, 'twas written ev'ry word, he ſays,
On ſtricteſt Vigils, and on Faſting Days,

When he his fleſh to penance did enjoin,
Nay took ſuch care to work it chaſte and fine,
He diſciplin'd himſelf at ev'ry line.
Then, gentlemen, no libel he intends,
Tho' ſome have ſtrove to wrong him with his Friends;
And Poets have ſo very few of thoſe,
They'd need take care whoſe favour 'tis they loſe,
Who'd be a Poet!——Parents all beware,
Cheriſh and educate your ſons with care:
Breed 'em to wholeſome Law, or give 'em trades,
Let 'em not follow th' Muſes, they are jades:
How many very hopeful riſing Cits
Have we of late known ſpoil'd by turning Wits?
Poets by Critics are worſe treated here,
Than on the bank-ſide butchers do a Bear.——
Faith, ſirs, be kind, ſince now his time is come,
When he muſt ſtand or fall as you ſhall doom:
Give him Bear-Garden-Law, that's Fair-play for't,
And he's content for One, to make you ſport.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

WELL, ſirs, if now my ſpouſe and I ſhould part,
To which kind Critic ſhall I give my heart?
Stay, let me look —— Not one in all the place
But has a ſcurvy, froward, damning face. ——
Have you reſolv'd then on the Poet's fall?
Go you ill-natur'd, ugly devils all. ——
The marry'd ſparks I know this Play will curſe
For the Wife's ſake!——but ſome of 'em have worſe.
Poets themſelves their own ill-luck have wrought,
You ne'er had learnt, had not their quarrels taught:

But as in the diſturbance of a ſtate,
Each factious maggot thinks of growing great:
So when the Poets firſt had jarring fits,
You all ſet up for Critics, and for Wits:
Then ſtrait there came, which coſt your mothers pains,
Songs and Lampoons in litters from your brains:
Libels, like ſpurious brats, ran up and down,
Which their dull parents were aſham'd to own;
But vented them in others names, like whores
That lay their Baſtards down at honeſt doors.
For ſhame, leave off this higgling way of wit,
Railing abroad, and roaring in the pit.
Let Poets live in peace, in quiet write,
Elſe may they all, to puniſh you, unite;
Join in one force to ſtudy to abuſe ye,
And teach your Wives and Miſſes how to uſe ye.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s DON CARLOS.

WHEN firſt our Author took this play in hand,
He doubted much, and long was at a ſtand.
He knew the fame and memory of kings
Were to be treated of as ſacred things,
Not as they're repreſented in this age,
Where they appear the lumber of the Stage!
Us'd only juſt for reconciling tools,
Or what is worſe, made villains all, or fools.
Beſides, the characters he ſhews to night,
He found were very difficult to write:
He found the fame of France and Spain at ſtake,
Therefore long paus'd, and fear'd which part to take;

Till this his judgment ſafeſt underſtood,
To make them both heroick as he cou'd.
But now the greateſt ſtop was yet unpaſt,
He found himſelf, alas! confin'd too faſt.
He is a man of pleaſure, ſirs, like you,
And therefore hardly could to buſineſs bow;
Till at the laſt he did this conqueſt get,
To make his pleaſure whetſtone to his wit,
So ſometimes for variety he writ.
But as thoſe blockheads, who diſcourſe by rote,
Sometimes ſpeak ſenſe, altho' they rarely know't:
So he ſcarce knew to what his work would grow,
But 'twas a Play, becauſe it would be ſo:
Yet well he knows this is a weak pretence,
For idleneſs is the worſt want of ſenſe.
Let him not now of careleſneſs be tax'd,
He'll write in earneſt, when he writes the next:
Mean while ———
Prune his ſuperfluous branches, never ſpare;
Yet do it kindly, be not too ſevere,
He may bear better fruit another year.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by a little Girl.

NOW what d'ye think my meſſage hither means?
Yonder's the Poet ſick behind the ſcenes:
He told me there was pity in my face,
And therefore ſent me here to make his peace. ——
Let me for once perſuade you to be kind;
For he has promis'd me to ſtand my friend.

And if this time I can your kindneſs move,
He'll write for me, he ſwears by all above,
When I am big enough to be in love. ——
Now won't ye be good-natur'd, ye fine men?
Indeed I'll grow as faſt as e'er I can,
And try if to his promiſe he'll be true,
Think on't when that time comes, ye do not know
But I may grow in love with ſome of you.
Or, at the worſt, I'm certain I ſhall ſee
Amongſt you thoſe who'll ſwear they're ſo with me.
But now, if by my ſuit you'll not be won,
You know what your unkindneſs oft has done;
I'll e'en forſake the play-houſe, and turn nun.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s ORPHAN, or the UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

TO you, great judges in this writing age,
The ſons of Wit, and patrons of the Stage,
With all thoſe humble thoughts, which ſtill have ſway'd
His pride, much doubting, trembling, and afraid
Of what is to his want of merit due,
And aw'd by ev'ry excellence in you,
The Author ſends to beg you will be kind,
And ſpare thoſe many faults you needs muſt find.
You to whom Wit a common foe is grown,
The thing ye ſcorn, and publickly diſown;
Though now perhaps y'are here for other ends,
He ſwears to me, ye ought to be his friends:
For he ne'er call'd ye yet inſipid tools:
Nor wrote one line to tell ye you were fools:
But ſays of wit ye have ſo large a ſtore,
So very much, you never will have more.

He ne'er with libel treated yet the town,
The names of honeſt men bedaw'd and ſhown;
Nay, never once lampoon'd the harmleſs life
Of ſuburb virgin, or of city wife.
Satyr's th' effect of poetry's diſeaſe,
Which, ſick of a lewd age, ſhe vents for eaſe,
But now her only ſtrife ſhould be to pleaſe;
Since of ill fate the baneful cloud's withdrawn,
And happineſs again begins to dawn;
Since back with joy and triumph he is come,
That always drew fears hence, ne'er brought 'em home.
Oft has he plow'd the boiſt'rous ocean o'er,
Yet ne'er more welcome to the longing ſhore,
Not when he brought home victories before.
For then freſh laurels flouriſh'd on his brow;
And he comes crown'd with olive branches now:
Receive him; oh receive him as his friends;
Embrace the bleſſings which he recommends;
Such quiet as your foes ſhall ne'er deſtroy;
Then ſhake off fears, and clap your hands for joy.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

YOU'VE ſeen one Orphan ruin'd here; and I
May be the next, if old Acaſto die:
Should it prove ſo, I'd fain amongſt you find
Who 'tis would to the fatherleſs be kind.
To whoſe protection might I ſafely go?
Is there among you no good-nature?——No.
What ſhall I do?——Should I the godly ſeek,
And go a conventicling twice a week?

Quit the lewd ſtage, and its prophane pollution,
Affect each form and ſaint-like inſtitution;
So draw the brethren all to contribution?
Or ſhall I (as I gueſs the poet may
Within theſe three days) fairly run away?
No; to ſome city-lodgings I'll retire;
Seem very grave, and privacy deſire;
Till I am thought ſome heireſs rich in lands,
Fled to eſcape a cruel guardian's hands:
Which may produce a ſtory worth the telling
Of the next ſparks that go a fortune-ſtealing.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s Hiſtory and Fall of CAIUS MARIUS.

IN ages paſt, (when will thoſe times renew?)
When empires flouriſh'd, ſo did poets too.
When great Auguſtus the world's empire held,
Horace and Ovid's happy verſe excell'd.
Ovid's ſoft genius, and his tender arts
Of moving nature, melted hardeſt hearts.
It did th' imperial beauty, Julia, move
To liſten to the language of his love.
Her father honour'd him: And on her breaſt,
With raviſh'd ſenſe in her embraces preſt,
He lay tranſported, fancy-full, and bleſt.
Horace's loftier genius boldlier rear'd
His manly head, and thro' all nature ſteer'd;
Her richeſt pleaſures in his verſe refin'd,
And wrought 'em to the reliſh of the mind.
He laſh'd, with a true poet's fearleſs rage,
The villainies and follies of the age.

Therefore Mecænas, that great fav'rite, rais'd
Him high, and by him was he highly prais'd.
Our Shakeſpear wrote too in an age as bleſt,
The happieſt poet of his time, and beſt;
A gracious Prince's favour chear'd his muſe,
A conſtant favour he ne'er fear'd to loſe.
Therefore he wrote with fancy unconfin'd,
And thoughts that were immortal as his mind.
And from the crop of his luxuriant pen
E'er ſince ſucceeding poets humbly glean.
Tho' much the moſt unworthy of the throng,
Our this day's poet fears he'as done him wrong.
Like greedy beggars that ſteal ſheaves away,
You'll find h'has rifled him of half a Play.
Amidſt his baſer droſs you'll ſee it ſhine
Moſt beautiful, amazing, and divine.
To ſuch low ſhifts, of late, are Poets worn,
Whilſt we both Wit's and Cæſar's abſence mourn;
Oh! when will He and Poetry return?
When ſhall we there again behold him ſit
'Midſt ſhining boxes and a courtly pit,
The lord of hearts, and preſident of wit?
When that bleſt day (quick may it come) appears,
His cares once baniſh'd, and his nation's fears,
The joyful Muſes on their hills ſhall ſing
Triumphant ſongs of Britain's happy King.
Plenty and peace ſhall flouriſh in our iſle,
And all things like the Engliſh beauty ſmile.
You, Critics, ſhall forget your natural ſpite,
And Poets with unbounded fancy write:
Ev'n this day's Poet ſhall be alter'd quite;
His thoughts more loftily and freely flow;
And he himſelf, whilſt you his verſe allow,
As much tranſported as he's humble now.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken in the Character of *Lavinia*.

A Miſchief on't! tho' I'm again alive,
May I believe this Play of ours ſhall thrive?
This drumming, trumpetting, and fighting Play:
Why, what a devil will the people ſay?
The nation that's without, and hears the din,
Will ſwear we're raiſing volunteers again.
For know, our Poet, when this Play was made,
Had nought but drums and trumpets in his head.
H'had baniſh'd Poetry and all her charms,
And needs the Fool would be a Man at Arms.
No prentice e'er grown weary of indentures,
Had ſuch a longing mind to ſeek adventures.
Nay, ſure at laſt th' infection general grew;
For t'other day I was a captain too:
Neither for Flanders nor for France to roam,
But, juſt as you were all, to ſtay at home.
And now for you who here come wrapt in cloaks,
Only for love of Underhill and nurſe Noakes;
Our Poet ſays, one day to a Play ye come,
Which ſerves ye half a year for Wit at home.
But which amongſt you is there is to be found,
Will take his third day's pawn for fifty pound?
Or, now he is caſhier'd, will fairly venture
To give him ready money for's debenture?
Therefore when he receiv'd that fatal doom,
This Play came forth, in hopes his Friends would come
To help a poor diſbanded Soldier home.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s SOLDIER'S FORTUNE.

Written by Lord *Falkland*.

FOrſaken dames, with leſs concern reflect
On their inconſtant heroes cold neglect,
Than we (provok'd by this ungrateful age)
Bear the hard fate of our abandon'd Stage;
With grief we ſee you raviſh'd from our arms,
And curſe the feeble virtue of our charms:
Curſe your falſe hearts, for none ſo falſe as they,
And curſe the eyes that ſtole thoſe hearts away.
Remember, faithleſs friends, there was a time,
(But oh the ſad remembrance of our prime!)
When to our arms with eager joys ye flew,
And we believ'd your treacherous hearts as true
As e'er was nymph of ours to one of you.
But a more pow'rful * ſaint enjoys ye now;
Fraught with ſweet ſins and abſolutions too:
To her are all your pious vows addreſt,
She's both your love's, and your religion's teſt,
The faireſt prelate of her time, and beſt.
We own her more deſerving far than we,
A juſt excuſe for your inconſtancy.
Yet 'twas unkindly done to leave us ſo;
Firſt to betray with love, and then undo,
A horrid crime y' are all addicted to.
Too ſoon, alas! your appetites are cloy'd,
And Phillis rules no more, when once enjoy'd:

* Pope Joan.

But all raſh oaths of love and conſtancy,
With the too-ſhort forgotten pleaſures die:
Whilſt ſhe, poor ſoul, robb'd of her deareſt eaſe,
Still drudges on, with vain deſire to pleaſe;
And reſtleſs follows you from place to place,
For tributes due to her autumnal face.
Deſerted thus by ſuch ungrateful men,
How can we hope you'll e'er return agen?
Here's no new charm to tempt ye as before,
Wit's now our only treaſure left in ſtore,
And that's a coin will paſs with you no more:
You who ſuch dreadful bullies would appear,
(True bullies! quiet when there's danger near)
Shew your great ſouls, in damning Poets here.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

WITH the diſcharge of paſſions much oppreſt,
Diſturb'd in brain, and penſive in his breaſt,
Full of thoſe thoughts which make th' unhappy ſad,
And by imagination half grown mad,
The Poet led abroad his mourning muſe,
And let her range, to ſee what ſport ſhe'd chuſe.
Strait like a bird got looſe, and on the wing,
Pleas'd with her freedom, ſhe began to ſing;
Each note was eccho'd all the vale along,
And this was what ſhe utter'd in her ſong: ——
Wretch, write no more for an uncertain fame,
Nor call thy muſe, when thou art dull, to blame.
Conſider with thyſelf how thou'rt unfit
To make that monſter of mankind, a Wit:

A Wit's a Toad, who ſwell'd with ſilly pride,
Full of himſelf, ſcorns all the world beſide;
Civil would ſeem, tho' he good manners lacks,
Smiles on all faces, rails behind all backs,
If e'er, good-natur'd, nought to ridicule,
Good-nature melts a wit into a fool:
Plac'd high like ſome jack-pudding, in a hall,
At Chriſtmas revels he makes ſport for all.
So much in little praiſes he delights,
But when he's angry draws his pen and writes:
A Wit to no man will his dues allow;
Wits will not part with a good word that's due:
So whoe'er ventures on the ragged coaſt
Of ſtarving Poets, certainly is loſt:
They rail like porters at the penny-poſt.
At a new Author's Play ſee one but ſit,
Making his ſnarling froward face of Wit,
The merit he allows, and praiſe he grants,
Comes like a tax from a poor wretch that wants.
O Poets, have a care of one another,
There's hardly one amongſt ye true to t'other.
Like Trinculo's and Stephano's, ye play
The leudeſt tricks each other to betray.
Like foes detract, yet flatt'ring friend-like ſmile,
And all is one another to beguile
Of praiſe, the monſter of your barren iſle.
Enjoy the proſtitute ye ſo admire,
Enjoy her to the full of your deſire,
Whilſt this poor ſcribbler wiſhes to retire,
Where he may ne'er repent his follies more,
But curſe the fate that wreck'd him on your ſhore.
Now you, who this day as his judges ſit,
After you've heard what he has ſaid of Wit;
Ought for your own ſakes not to be ſevere,
But ſhew ſo much to think he meant none here.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s ATHEIST, or Second Part of the SOLDIER'S FORTUNE.

THough Plays and Prologues ne'er did more abound,
Ne'er were good Prologues harder to be found.
To me the cauſe ſeems eas'ly underſtood;
For there are Poets prove not very good,
Who, like baſe ſign poſt dawbers, wanting ſkill,
Steal from great maſter's hands, and copy ill.
Thus, if by chance, before a noble feaſt
Of generous Wit, to whet and fit your taſte,
Some poignant Satire in a Prologue riſe,
And growing vices handſomely chaſtiſe;
Each poetaſter thence preſumes on rules,
And ever after call ye downright fools.
These Marks deſcribe him. ———
Writing by rote; ſmall wit, or none to ſpare;
Jingle and chime's his ſtudy, toil and care:
He always in one line upbraids the Age;
And a good reaſon why; it rhymes to Stage.
With Wit and Pit he keeps a hideous pother;
Sure to be damn'd by one, for want of t'other:
But if, by chance, he gets the French word Raillery,
Lord, how he feagues the vizor-maſques with Gallery!
'Tis ſaid, Aſtrologers ſtrange wonders find,
To come, in two great Planets lately join'd.
From our two Houſes joining, moſt will hold
Vaſt deluges of Dulneſs were foretold.
Poor Holborn Ballads now being worn away
By tides of duller Madrigals than they;

Jockeys and Jenneys ſet to Northern Airs,
While lowſy Theſpis chaunts at country fairs.
Politick Ditties, full of Stage debate,
And merry Catches, how to Rule the State.
Vicars neglect their flocks, to turn Tranſlators,
And barley-water whey-fac'd Beaus write Satires;
Tho' none can gueſs to which moſt praiſe belongs,
To the learn'd Verſions, Scandals, or the Songs.
For all things now by contraries ſucceed;
Of Wit or Virtue there's no longer need:
Beauty ſubmits to him who loudeſt rails;
She fears the ſaucy fop, and he prevails.
Who for his beſt preferment would deviſe,
Let him renounce all Honeſty, and riſe.
Villains and Paraſites ſucceſs will gain;
But in the court of Wit, ſhall dulneſs reign?
No: Let the angry 'ſquire give his Iambicks o'er,
Twirl cravat ſtrings, but write Lampoons no more;
Rhymeſters get Wit, e'er they pretend to ſhew it,
Nor think a game at Crambo makes a Poet:
Elſe is our Author hopeleſs of ſucceſs,
But then his ſtudy ſhall be next time leſs:
He'll find out ways to your applauſe more eaſy;
That is, write worſe and worſe, 'till he can pleaſe ye.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by Mr. DUKE of Cambridge.

IT is not long, ſince in the noiſy Pit
Tumultuous Faction ſat the judge of Wit;
Their Knaves applauded what their Blockheads writ.

At a Whig-Brother's Play, the bawling croud
Burſt out in ſhouts, as zealous, and as loud,
As when ſome Member's ſtout Election-beer
Gains the mad Voice of a whole Drunken ſhire.
And yet, ev'n then, our Poet's truth was try'd,
Though 'twas a dev'liſh pull to ſtem the tide;
And tho' he ne'er did line of Treaſon write,
Nor made one rocket on Queen Beſſe's night,
Such was his fortune, or ſo good his cauſe,
Ev'n then he fail'd not wholly of applauſe.
He that could then eſcape, now bolder grows:
Since the Whig-tide runs out, the Loyal flows.
All you who lately here preſum'd to bawl,
Take warning from your brethren at Guildhall:
The Spirit of Rebellion there is quell'd,
And here your Poet's Acts are all repeal'd:
Impartial Juſtice has reſum'd again
Her awful ſeat, nor bears the ſword in vain.
The Stage ſhall laſh the follies of the times,
And the Law's Vengeance overtake the Crimes.
The Perjur'd Wretch ſhall no protection gain
From his diſhonour'd Robe and Golden Chain;
But ſtand expos'd to all th' inſulting town,
While rotten Rags bedawb the Scarlet Gown.
Pack hence betimes, you that were never ſparing
To ſave the land, and damn yourſelves, by ſwearing.
Should the wiſe City now, to eaſe your fears,
Erect an office to inſure your ears?
Thither ſuch numerous ſhoals of Witneſſes,
And Juries, conſcious of their guilt wou'd preſs,
That to the Chamber hence might more be gain'd,
Than ever Mother Creſwell from it drain'd;
And Perjury to the Orphan's Bank reſtore
Whatever Whoredom robb'd it of before.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Otway*'s VENICE PRESERVED.

IN theſe diſtracted times, when each man dreads
The bloody ſtratagems of buſy heads;
When we have fear'd three years we know not what,
'Till witneſſes begin to die o' th' rot;
What made our Poet meddle with a Plot?
Was't that he fancy'd, for the very ſake
And name of Plot, his trifling Play might take?
For there's not in't one inch-board evidence,
But 'tis, he ſays, to reaſon plain and ſenſe,
And that he thinks a plauſible defence.
Were truth by ſenſe and reaſon to be try'd,
Sure all our ſwearers might be laid aſide;
No, of ſuch tools our Author has no need,
To make his Plot, or make his Play ſucceed:
He, of black bills, has no prodigious tales,
Or Spaniſh pilgrims caſt aſhore in Wales:
Here's not one murder'd magiſtrate, at leaſt,
Kept rank, like ven'ſon, for a city feaſt,
Grown four days ſtiff, the better to prepare
And fit his pliant limbs to ride in chair.
Yet here's an army rais'd, tho' under ground,
But no man ſeen, nor one commiſſion found:
Here is a traytor too, that's very old,
Turbulent, ſubtle, miſchievous, and bold;
Bloody, revengeful; and, to crown his part,
Loves fumbling with a wench with all his heart:
'Till, after having many changes paſt,
In ſpite of age (thanks t' heav'n) is hang'd at laſt:

Next is a ſenator that keeps a whore,
In Venice none a higher office bore,
To lewdneſs ev'ry night the leacher ran;
Shew me, all London, ſuch another man;
Match him at mother Creſwell's if you can.
O Poland, Poland! had it been thy lot,
T' have heard in time of this Venetian Plot,
Thou ſurely choſen hadſt one king from thence,
And honour'd them, as thou haſt England ſince.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

THE text is done, and now for application,
And when that's ended, paſs your approbation.
Though the conſpiracy's prevented here,
Methinks I ſee another hatching there:
And there's a certain faction fain would ſway,
If they had ſtrength enough, and damn this Play:
But this the Author bid me boldly ſay,
If any take this plainneſs in ill part,
He's glad-on't from the bottom of his heart:
Poets in honour of the truth ſhould write,
With the ſame ſpirit brave men for it fight.
And though againſt him cauſeleſs hatreds riſe,
And daily where he goes of late he ſpies
The ſcowles of ſullen and revengeful eyes;
'Tis what he knows, with much contempt, to bear,
And ſerves a cauſe too good to let him fear.
He fears no poiſon from an incens'd drab,
No ruffian's five foot ſword, nor raſcal's ſtab;
Nor any other ſnares of miſchief laid,
Not a roſe-alley cudgel ambuſcade;

From any private cauſe where malice reigns,
Or general pique all blockheads have to brains:
Nothing ſhall daunt his pen, when truth does call,
No, not the * picture-mangler at Guildhall.
The rebel-tribe, of which that's vermin's one,
Have now ſet forward, and their courſe begun;
And while that prince's figure they deface,
As they before had maſſacred his name,
Durſt their baſe fears but look him in the face,
They'd uſe his perſon as they've us'd his fame:
A face in which ſuch lineament they read
Of that great martyr's, whoſe rich blood they ſhed,
That their rebellious hate they ſtill retain,
And in his ſon would murder him again.
With indignation then let each brave heart,
Rouze, and unite, to take his injur'd part;
'Till royal love and goodneſs call him home,
And ſongs of triumphs meet him as he come:
'Till heav'n his honour and our peace reſtore,
And villains never wrong his virtue more.

PROLOGUE

SPOKEN UPON

His Royal Highneſs the Duke of YORK

coming to the Theatre, Friday, April 21, 1682.

WHEN too much plenty, luxury, and eaſe,
Had ſurfeited this iſle to a diſeaſe;
When noiſeſome blains did it's beſt parts o'erſpread,
And on the reſt their dire infection ſhed;

* The raſcal that cut the Duke of York's picture.

Our Great Phyſician, who the nature knew
Of the diſtemper, and from whence it grew,
Fix'd for Three Kingdoms quiet (Sir) on You.
He caſt his ſearching eyes o'er all the frame,
And finding whence before one Sickneſs came,
How once before our Miſchiefs foſter'd were,
Knew well Your Virtue, and apply'd you there:
Where ſo your goodneſs, ſo your juſtice ſway'd,
You but appear'd, and the wild Plague was ſtay'd.
When, from the filthy Dunghill-faction bred,
New form'd Rebellion durſt rear up it's head,
Anſwer me all: Who ſtruck the Monſter dead?
See, ſee, the injur'd Prince, and bleſs his name,
Think on the Martyr from whoſe loins he came:
Think on the blood was ſhed for you before,
And curſe the Parricides that thirſt for more.
His foes are yours, then of their wiles beware:
Lay, lay him in your hearts, and guard him there:
Where let his Wrongs your zeal for him improve;
He wears a ſword will juſtify your love.
With blood ſtill ready for your good t' expend,
And has a heart that ne'er forgot his friend.
His Duteous Loyalty before you lay,
And learn of him, unmurm'ring, to obey.
Think what he'as born, your quiet to reſtore,
Repent your madneſs, and rebel no more.
No more let Bout'ſeu's hope to lead petitions;
Scriv'ners to be treas'rers; Pedlars, politicians;
Nor ev'ry fool, whoſe wife has tript at court,
Pluck up a ſpirit, and turn Rebel for't.
In lands where cuckolds multiply like ours,
What Prince can be too jealous of their powers,
Or can too often think himſelf alarm'd?
They're Male-contents that ev'ry where go arm'd:

And when the horned Herd's together got,
Nothing portends a Commonwealth like that.
Caſt, caſt your idols off, your gods of wood,
E'er yet Philiſtines fatten with your blood:
Renounce your prieſts of Baal with amen faces,
Your Wapping feaſts, and your Mile-end high-places.
Nail all your Medals on the gallows poſt,
In recompence th' Original was loſt:
At theſe, illuſtrious repentance pay,
In his kind hands your humble off'rings lay:
Let Royal Pardon be by him implor'd,
Th' Attoning Brother of your Anger'd Lord:
He only brings a Medicine fit to aſſwage
A People's Folly, and rouz'd Monarch's Rage.
An Infant Prince yet lab'ring in the womb,
Fated with wond'rous happineſs to come,
He goes to fetch the mighty bleſſings home:
Send all your wiſhes with him, let the air
With gentle breezes waft it ſafely here,
The ſeas, like what they'll carry, calm and fair:
Let the Illuſtrious Mother touch our land
Mildly, as hereafter may her Son command;
While our glad Monarch welcomes her to ſhore,
With kind aſſurance ſhe ſhall part no more.
Be the Majeſtick Babe then ſmiling born,
And all good ſigns of fate his birth adorn;
So live and grow, a conſtant pledge to ſtand
Of Cæſar's love to an obedient land.

PROLOGUE

To *George Villiers* Duke of *Buckingham*'s REHEARSAL.

WE might well call this ſhort Mock-play of ours,
A poſy made of Weeds inſtead of Flowers;
Yet ſuch have been preſented to your noſes,
And there are ſuch, I fear, who thought 'em Roſes.
Would ſome of 'em were here, to ſee, this night,
What ſtuff it is in which they took delight!
Here briſk inſipid rogues, for Wit, let fall
Sometimes dull Senſe; but oftner none at all;
There ſtrutting heroes, with a grim-fac'd train,
Shall brave the gods in King Cambyſes' vein.
For (changing rules, of late, as if men writ,
In ſpite of reaſon, nature, art and wit)
Our Poets make us laugh at Tragedy,
And with their Comedies they make us cry.
Now Criticks, do your worſt, that here are met;
For, like a rook, I have hedg'd in my bet.
If you approve; I ſhall aſſume the ſtate
Of thoſe high-flyers, whom I imitate:
And juſty too, for I will teach you more
Than ever they would let you know before;
I will not only ſhew the feats they do,
But give you all their reaſons for 'em too.
Some honour may to me from hence ariſe:
But if by my endeavours you grow wiſe,
And what you once ſo prais'd, ſhall now deſpiſe;
Then I'll cry out, ſwell'd with poetick rage,
'Tis I, *John Lacy*, have reform'd your Stage.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

THE Play is at an end, but where's the Plot?
That circumſtance our Poet *Bayes* forgot.
And we can boaſt, tho' tis a plotting age,
No place is freer from it than the Stage.
The antients plotted, though, and ſtrove to pleaſe
With ſenſe that might be underſtood with eaſe;
They every Scene with ſo much Wit did ſtore,
That who brought any in, went out with more.
But this new way of Wit does ſo ſurprize,
Men loſe their Wits in wond'ring where it lies.
If it be true, that monſtrous births preſage
The following miſchiefs that afflict the age,
And ſad diſaſters to the ſtate proclaim;
Plays without Head or Tail may do the ſame.
Wherefore for ours, and for the kingdom's peace,
May this prodigious way of writing ceaſe.
Let's have at leaſt, once in our lives, a time
When we may hear ſome Reaſon, not all Rhyme.
We have this ten years felt its influence,
Pray let this prove a year of Proſe and Senſe.

PROLOGUE

To *George Villiers* Duke of *Buckingham*'s CHANCES.

OF all men, thoſe have reaſon leaſt to care
For being laugh'd at, who can laugh their ſhare:
And that's a thing our Author's apt to uſe
Upon occaſion, when no man can chuſe.

Suppoſe now at this inſtant one of you
Were tickled by a fool, what would you do?
'Tis ten to one you'd laugh: here's juſt the caſe,
For there are fools that tickle with their face.
Your gay fool tickles with his dreſs and motions;
But your grave fool of fools with ſilly notions.
Is it not then unjuſt that fops ſhould ſtill
Force one to laugh, and then take laughing ill?
Yet ſince perhaps to ſome it gives offence,
That men are tickled at the want of ſenſe;
Our Author thinks he takes the readieſt way
To ſhew all he has laugh'd at here fair play.
For if ill writing be a folly thought,
Correcting ill is ſure a greater fault.
Then gallants laugh, but chuſe the right place firſt,
For judging ill is of all faults the worſt.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

PERHAPS you, gentlemen, expect to-day
The Author of this Fag-end of a Play,
According to the modern way of Wit,
Should ſtrive to be before-hand with the Pit;
Begin to rail at you, and ſubtly to
Prevent the affront by giving the firſt blow.
He wants not precedents, which often ſway
In matters far more weighty than a Play:
But he, no grave admirer of a rule,
Won't by example learn to play the fool.
The ends of Plays ſhould be to entertain,
And not to keep the auditors in pain.

Giving our price, and for what trash we please,
He thinks the Play being done, you should have ease.
No Wit, no Sense, no Freedom, and a Box,
Is much like paying money for the Stocks.
Besides, the Author dreads the strut and mein
Of new-prais'd Poets, having often seen
Some of his fellows, who have writ before,
When Nell has danc'd her jig, steal to the door,
Hear the Pit clap, and with conceit of that
Swell, and believe themselves the lord knows what.
Most writers now-a-days are grown so vain,
That once approv'd, they write, and write again,
'Till they have writ away the fame they got,
Our Friend this way of writing fancies not.
And hopes you will not tempt him with your praise,
To rank himself with some that write new Plays:
For he knows ways enough to be undone,
Without the help of Poetry for one.

PROLOGUE

To *John Sheffield* Duke of *Buckingham*'s Alteration of JULIUS CÆSAR.

HOPE to mend Shakespear! or to match his stile!
'Tis such a jest, would make a stoick smile.
Too fond of fame, our Poet soars too high;
Yet freely owns he wants the wings to fly:
So sensible of his presumptuous thought,
That he confesses while he does the fault:
This to the fair will no great wonder prove,
Who oft in blushes yield to what they love.
Of greatest actions, and of noblest men,
This story most deserves a Poet's pen.

For who can wiſh a ſcene more juſtly fam'd,
When Rome and mighty Julius are but nam'd!
That State of Heroes, who the World had brav'd!
That wond'rous Man, who ſuch a State inſlav'd!
Yet loath he was to take ſo rough a way,
And after govern'd with ſo mild a ſway,
At diſtance now of ſev'nteen hundred years,
Methinks a lovely raviſher appears;
Whom, tho' forbid by virtue to excuſe,
A nymph might pardon, and could ſcarce refuſe.

PROLOGUE

To *John Sheffield* Duke of *Buckingham*'s MARCUS BRUTUS.

OUR ſcene is Athens. And great Athens nam'd,
What ſoul ſo dull as not to be inflam'd?
Methinks, at mentioning that ſacred place,
A rev'rend awe appears in ev'ry face,
For men ſo fam'd, of ſuch prodigious parts,
As taught the world all ſciences and arts.
Amidſt all theſe, ye ſhall behold a man
The moſt applauded ſince makind began;
Out-ſhining ev'n thoſe Greeks who moſt excel;
Whoſe life was one fix'd courſe of doing well.
Oh! who can therefore without tears attend
On ſuch a life, and ſuch a fatal end?
But here our Author, beſides other faults
Of ill expreſſions, and of vulgar thoughts,
Commits one crime and needs an act of grace,
And breaks the laws of unity of place:
Yet, to ſuch noble patriots, overcome
By factious violence, and baniſh'd Rome,

Athens alone a fit retreat could yield:
And where can Brutus fall, but in Philippi Field?
Some Criticks judge, ev'n love itſelf too mean
A care to mix in ſuch a lofty ſcene,
And with thoſe ancient bards of Greece believe
Friendſhip has ſtronger charms to pleaſe or grieve:
But our more am'rous Poet, finding love,
Amidſt all other cares, ſtill ſhines above;
Let not the beſt of Romans end their lives,
Without juſt ſoftneſs for the kindeſt wives.
Yet, *if* ye think his gentle nature ſuch,
As to have ſoften'd this great tale too much,
Soon will your eyes grow dry, and paſſion fall;
When ye reflect, 'tis all but conjugal.
This to the few and knowing was addreſt;
And now 'tis fit I ſhould ſalute the reſt.
Moſt reverend dull judges of the Pit,
By nature curs'd with the wrong ſide of Wit!
You need not care whate'er you ſee to-night,
How ill ſome Players act, or Poets write;
Should our miſtakes be never ſo notorious,
You'll have the joy of being more cenſorious:
Shew your ſmall talent then, let that ſuffice ye;
But grow not vain upon it, I adviſe ye;
Each petty critic can objections raiſe,
The greateſt ſkill is knowing when to praiſe.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Banks*'s VIRTUE BETRAYED, or ANNA BULLEN.

Written by a Perſon of Quality.

TO all impartial Judges in the Pit,
And ev'ry beauteous patroneſs of Wit;
I'm ſent to plead the Poet's cauſe, and ſay,
There's not one ſlander in his modeſt Play.
He brings before your eyes a modern ſtory,
Yet meddles not with either Whig or Tory.
Was't not enough, vain men of either ſide,
Two Roſes once the Nation did divide?
But muſt it be in danger now agen,
Betwixt our Scarlet and Green-Ribbon men?
Who made this diff'rence were not England's friends:
Be not their tools to ſerve their plotting ends.
Damn the State-ſop, who here his zeal diſcovers,
And o'er the Stage, like our ill genius, hovers;
Give us a Pit of Drunkards, and of Lovers;
Good ſanguine men, who mind not ſtate affair,
But bid a baſe world of itſelf take care.
We hope there lives not ſo abhorr'd a thing,
But loves his Country, and would ſerve his King.
But in your Parties, why ſhould we engage,
Or meddle with the Plots of a mad age?
We loſe enough by thoſe upon the Stage.
Welcome maſk-teazer, peeviſh gameſter, huffer;
All fools but politicians we can ſuffer;
A God's name, let each keep to his vocation;
Our trade is to mend you, and not the nation:

Beſides, our Author hath this further end,
'Tis not enough if but one's ſide's his friend,
He needs you all his weakneſs to defend:
And to oblige you to't, hopes he has ſhown
No country has men braver than your own.
His heroes all to England are confin'd;
To your own fathers (ſure) you will be kind.
He brings no foreigners to move your pity,
But ſends them to a jury of the city.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

WELL, ſirs, your kind opinion now, I pray,
Of this our neither Whig nor Tory Play:
To blow ſuch coals our conſcious muſe denies;
Wit, ſacred Wit, ſuch ſubjects ſhould deſpiſe.
The Author ſays, his Heliconian ſtream
Is not yet drain'd to ſuch a low extreme;
T' abuſe one party with a curſed Play,
And bribe the other for a large Third Day.
Like gladiators, then you ſtrait reſort;
And croud to make your Nero-faction ſport.
But what's more ſtrange, that men of ſenſe ſhould do it!
For worrying one another, pay the Poet:
So butchers at a baiting, take delight,
For him that keeps the bears, to roar and fight;
Both friends and foes ſuch Authors make their game,
Who have your money, that was all their aim:
No matter for the Play, nor for their Wit,
The better Farce is acted in the Pit.

Both parties to be cheated will agree,
And ſwallow any nonſenſe, ſo it be
With faction fac'd, and gilt with loyalty.
Here's ſuch a rout with whigging and with torying,
That you neglect your dear-lov'd ſin of whoring:
The vizor-maſk that ventur'd her half-crown,
Finding no hopes but here to be undone,
Like a caſt miſtreſs paſt her dear delight,
Turns godly ſtrait, and goes to church in ſpite;
And does not doubt, ſince you are grown ſo fickle,
To find more cullies in a conventicle:
We on the Stage ſtand ſtill, and are content,
To ſee you act what we ſhould repreſent.
You uſe us like the women that ye woo;
You make us ſport, and pay us for it too.
Well, we're reſolv'd, that in our next play-bill,
We'll print at large a trial of your ſkill,
And that five hundred monſters are to fight;
Then more will run to ſee ſo ſtrange a ſight,
Than the Morocco, or the Moſcovite.

PROLOUGE

To Mr. *Banks*'s EARL of ESSEX.

Spoken by Major MAHON, the firſt four Days.

THE merchant joyful with the hopes of gain,
Ventures his life and fortunes on the main;
But the poor Poet, oft'ner does expoſe
More than his life, his credit, for applauſe;
The Play's his veſſel, and his venture Wit,
Hopes are his Indies, rocks and ſeas the Pit.
Yet the good-natur'd Author bids me ſwear
He'll court you ſtill the more his fate draws near;

And cannot chuſe but blame their feeble rage,
That crow at you, upon their dunghill Stage:
A certain ſign they merit to be curſt,
When to excuſe their fault, they cry whore firſt.
So oft in their dull Prologues 'tis expreſt,
That Critick now becomes no more a jeſt;
Methinks ſelf int'reſt in 'em more ſhou'd rule,
There's none ſo impudent to aſk a dole,
And then to call his benefactor fool.
They merit to be damn'd as well as poor;
For who that's in a ſtorm, and hears it roar,
But then would pray, that never pray'd before?
Yet ſeas are calm ſometimes; and you like thoſe,
Are neceſſary friends, but curſed foes.
But if amongſt you all he has no friend,
He humbly begs that you would be ſo kind,
Lay malice by, and uſe him as you find.

[*For the Epilogue to this Play ſee Dryden's Epilogues at the beginning of this Volume.*]

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Banks*'s CYRUS THE GREAT.

Addreſſed to her Royal Highneſs the Princeſs ANNE of DENMARK.

WHEN all that we thought great and good was gone,
And the whole world did in that deluge drown,
When mourning Cupids flagg'd their tender wings,
And the ſad muſes broke their warbling ſtrings;
When ſhe was fled that ſhin'd with pity here,
What cou'd revive the drooping Theatre! ——

But from the Phœnix aſhes in their ſpice,
Lo, I behold another goddeſs riſe.
All bleſſings that with her, great Princeſs, flew,
Can never be reſtor'd us, but in You.
The dove in the glad ark was not ſo kind,
Who brought the olive, and reviv'd mankind.
The laurels fading now behind our ſcene,
Like Virgil's grotto, ſhall be ever green.
Let conquering William ſend abroad his darts,
Secure for him you rule his peoples hearts.
And his ſoft pledge only herſelf withdrew,
Whilſt all her Miracles ſucceed in You:
Then let's to Heav'n in loudeſt anthems ſing
That ſuch bright hopes we have, and ſuch a King.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by a Boy and Girl, by way of DIALOGUE.

Curtain falls.

Girl. HOLD, is the Play done?
Boy. Ay, pretty rogue.
Girl. What, a new Play without an Epilogue!
Boy. Lauſaria's dead, Panthea too is ſlain,
And wou'd you have dead bodies riſe again?
That were indeed a very pretty fact,
You had enough of that in the firſt Act.
Girl. Why what d'you make of Mr. Betterton?
Boy. The curtain's dropt, and he's glad he's gone;
The Poet too, has loaded him ſo ſore,
He ſcarce has breath enough for one word more.

Since moſt of the old Actors then are kill'd,
And the great Hero has forſook the field;
What if WE did to cover ſuch a blot,
Addreſs ourſelves to th' audience?

Girl. That's well thought;
And ſince we muſt ſay ſomething, pray begin,
You to the ladies, I the gentlemen.

Boy. Ladies, if you will to our Play be kind,
May every one their dear laſt wiſhes find;
May virgins thoſe enjoy they value beſt,
And wives their huſbands kindneſs to the laſt.
At baſſet may your good luck ſo continue,
And win the gameſter's heart, as well as guinea.

Girl. And, gentlemen, if you will like our Play,
May this good fate attend you ev'ry day.
Let no rude Boreas, from his boiſterous cell,
Profane the curl that on your wig ſits well.
Nor bruſh the ſacred powder from the cloaths
Of two ſuch ſights of dainty-dappl'd beaux.
May nothing bring you out of humour hither,
Nor hackney-coach be wanting in wet weather.

Boy. Ladies, w'are almoſt ſure of your good natures,
'Twere cruel to deny ſuch little creatures.

Girl. And if the men miſlike, or make a pother,

Boy. Evads we'll fit 'em for't one way or other.
'Tis a wiſe child that knows its father, ſirs,
For aught we know, we may be ſome of yours,
We'll come and lay ourſelves before your doors.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Wycherley's* Love in a Wood.

CUSTOM, which bids the thief from cart harangue,
All thoſe that come to make and ſee him hang,
Wills the damn'd Poet, though he know's he's gone,
To greet you, ere his execution.
Not having fear of critic 'fore his eyes;
But ſtill rejecting wholeſome, good advice,
He e'en is come to ſuffer here to-day,
For counterfeiting, as you judge, a Play,
Which is againſt dread Phœbus higheſt treaſon:
Damn, damning judges, therefore, you have reaſon.
You he does mean, who for the ſelf-ſame fault,
That damning privilege of yours have bought.
So the huge bankers, when they needs muſt fail,
Send the ſmall brothers of their trade to jail;
Whilſt they, by breaking, gentlemen are made,
Then, more than any, ſcorn poor men o'th' trade.
You harden'd Renegado Poets, who
Treat rhiming Poets worſe than Turk wou'd do:
But vent your heatheniſh rage, hang, draw, and quarter,
His muſe will die to day a fleering martyr;
Since for bald jeſt, dull libel, or lampoon,
There are who ſuffer perſecution,
With the undaunted briſkneſs of buffoon;
And ſtrict profeſſors live of raillery,
Defying porter's lodge or pillory.
For thoſe who yet write on, our poet's fate
Should, as co-ſufferers, commiſerate;

But he in vain their pity now wou'd crave,
Who for themſelves, alas! no pity have,
And their own gaſping credit will not ſave.
And thoſe much leſs, our criminal wou'd ſpare,
Who ne'er in rhime tranſgreſs, if ſuch there are:
Well then, who nothing hopes, needs nothing fear;
And he, before your cruel votes ſhall do it,
By his deſpair declares himſelf no Poet.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by DAPPERWIT.

NOW, my briſk brothers of the Pit, you'll ſay,
I'm come to ſpeak a good word for the Play;
But (gallants) let me periſh, if I do,
For I have Wit, and Judgment, juſt like you;
Wit never partial, Judgment free and bold,
For fear or friendſhip never bought or ſold,
Nor by good nature e'er to be cajol'd
Good nature in a critic were a crime,
Like mercy in a judge, and renders him
Guilty of all thoſe faults, he does forgive:
Beſides, if thief from gallows you reprieve,
He'll cut your throat; ſo Poet ſav'd from ſhame,
In damn'd lampoon will murder your good name.
Yet in true ſpite to him, and to his Play,
(Good faith) you ſhou'd not rail at 'em to-day:
But to be more his foe, ſeem moſt his friend,
And ſo, maliciouſly, the Play commend,
That he may be betray'd to writing on,
And Poet let him be, to be undone.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Wycherley*'s GENTLEMAN DANCING-MASTER.

Addreſſed to the CITY.

Newly after the Removal of the Duke's Company from *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*, to their new Theatre near *Saliſbury-Court*.

OUR Author (like us) finding 'twou'd ſcarce do,
At t'other end o'th' Town, is come to you;
And ſince 'tis his laſt trial, has that wit
To throw himſelf on a ſubſtantial Pit;
Where needy Wit, or Critic dare not come,
Leſt neighbour i'the cloak, with looks ſo grum,
Shou'd prove a Dun:
Where Punk in vizor dare not rant and tear,
To put us out, ſince Bridewell is ſo near,
In ſhort, we ſhall be heard, be underſtood,
If not, ſhall be admir'd, and that's as good;
For you to ſenſeleſs Plays have ſtill been kind,
Nay, where no Senſe was, you a Jeſt wou'd find
And never was it heard of, that the City
Did ever take occaſion to be witty
Upon dull Poet, or ſtiff Player's action,
But ſtill with claps oppos'd the hiſſing faction.
But if you hiſs'd, 'twas at the Pit, not Stage;
So, with the Poet, damn'd the damning Age.
And ſtill we know are ready to engage
Againſt the flouting, ticking Gentry, who
Citizen, Player, Poet wou'd undo:
The Poet! no, unleſs by commendation,
For on the 'Change Wits have no reputation:
And rather than be branded for a Wit,
He with you Able Men wou'd credit get.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by FLIRT.

THE ladies firſt I am to compliment,
Whom (if he cou'd) the Poet wou'd content,
But to their pleaſure then they muſt conſent.
Muſt ſpoil their ſport ſtill by their modeſty,
And when they ſhou'd be pleas'd, cry out, O fie,
And the leaſt ſmutty jeſt will ne'er paſs by.
But city damſel ne'er had confidence,
At ſmutty Play to take the leaſt offence,
But mercy ſhews, to ſhew her innocence.
Yet leſt the merchant's daughter ſhou'd to day
Be ſcandaliz'd, not at our harmleſs Play,
But our Hippolita, ſince ſhe's like one
Of us bold flirts of t'other end o'th' town;
Our poet ſending to you (tho' unknown)
His beſt reſpects by me, does frankly own
The Character to be unnatural;
Hippolita is not like you at all:
You, while your lovers court you, ſtill look grum,
And far from wooing, when they woo, cry mum;
And if ſome of you e'er were ſtol'n away,
Your portions fault 'twas only, I dare ſay.
Thus much for him the Poet bid me ſpeak,
Now to the men I my own mind will break:
You good men o'th' Exchange, on whom alone
We muſt depend, when ſparks to ſea are gone;
Into the Pit already you are come,
'Tis but a ſtep more to our tyring-room;

Where none of us but will be wond'rous ſweet
Upon an able Love of Lombard-ſtreet:
You we had rather ſee between our ſcenes,
Than ſpendthrift fops with better clothes and meins;
Inſtead of lac'd coats, belts, and pantaloons,
Your velvet jumps, gold chains, and grave fur gowns;
Inſtead of perriwigs, and broad cock'd hats,
Your ſatin caps, ſmall cuffs, and vaſt cravats:
For you are fair and ſquare in all your dealings,
You never cheat your doxies with gilt ſhillings;
You ne'er will break our windows; then you are
Fit to make love, while our huzzas make war;
And ſince all gentlemen muſt pack to ſea,
Our gallants, and our judges you muſt be:
We therefore, and our Poet, do ſubmit,
To all the Camblet Cloaks now i'the Pit.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Wycherley's* PLAIN DEALER.

Spoken by the *Plain Dealer*.

I The Plain Dealer am to act to-day,
And my rough part begins before the Play.
Firſt, you who ſcribble, yet hate all that write,
And keep each other company in ſpite,
As rivals in your common miſtreſs, fame,
And with faint praiſes, one another damn:
'Tis a good Play, we know, you can't forgive,
But grudge yourſelves the pleaſure you receive.
Our ſcribbler therefore bluntly bid me ſay,
He wou'd not have the Wits pleas'd here to-day.

Next, you, the fine, loud Gentlemen o'th' Pit,
Who damn all Plays; yet, if y'ave any Wit,
'Tis but what here you ſpunge, and daily get:
Poets, like friends to whom you are in debt,
You hate; and ſo rooks laugh, to ſee undone
Thoſe puſhing gameſters whom they live upon.
Well, you are ſparks; and ſtill will be i' th' faſhion;
Rail then at Plays, to hide your obligation.
Now, you ſhrewd Judges, who the boxes ſway,
Leading the ladies hearts and ſenſe aſtray,
And for their ſakes, ſee all, and hear no Play;
Correct your cravats, foretops, lock behind;
The dreſs and breeding of the Play ne'er mind.
Plain-Dealing is, you'll ſay, quite out of faſhion;
You'll hate it here, as in a dedication.
And you fair neighbours, in a limning Poet,
No more than in a painter will allow it.
Pictures too like, the ladies will not pleaſe;
They muſt be drawn too here like goddeſſes.
You, as at Lely's too, wou'd truncheon wield,
And look like heroes, in a painted field:
But the coarſe dauber of the coming ſcenes,
To follow life and nature only means,
Diſplays you as you are, makes his fine woman
A mercenary jilt, and true to no man:
His men of wit, and pleaſure of the age,
Are as dull rogues as ever cumber'd Stage.
He draws a friend only to cuſtom juſt,
And makes him naturally break his truſt.
I only act a part like none of you,
And yet you'll ſay, it is a fool's part too:
An honeſt man, who like you, never winks
At faults; but unlike you, ſpeaks what he thinks:

The only fool, who ne'er found patron yet,
For truth is now a fault as well as wit.
And where elſe, but on ſtages, do we ſee
Truth pleaſing, or rewarded honeſty?
Which our bold Poet does this day in me.
If not to th' honeſt, be to th' proſperous kind,
Some friends at court let the Plain Dealer find.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by the Widow *Blackacre*.

TO you the judges learned in ſtage-laws,
Our poet now, by me, ſubmits his cauſe;
For with young judges, ſuch as moſt of you,
The men by women beſt their bus'neſs do:
And, truth on't is, if you did not ſit here,
To keep us for a term thro'out the year,
We cou'd not live by'r tongues: nay, but for you,
Our chamber-practice wou'd be little too.
And 'tis not only the Stage-practicer
Who, by your meeting, gets her living here:
For, as in hall of Weſtminſter,
Sleek ſempſtreſs vents, amidſt the courts, her ware;
So while we bawl, and you in judgment ſit,
The vizor-maſk ſells linen too i'th' Pit.
O, many of your friends, beſides us here,
Do live by putting off their ſev'ral ware.
Here's daily done the great affairs o'th' the nation;
Let love and us then ne'er have long vacation.
But hold; like other pleaders I have done
Not my poor client's buſineſs, but my own.

Spare me a word then now for him. Firſt know,
'Squires of the long robe, he does humbly ſhow,
He has a juſt right in abuſing you,
Becauſe he is a Brother-Templar too:
For at the Bar you rally one another;
Nay, fool and knave is ſwallow'd from a brother:
If not the Poet here, the Templar ſpare,
And maul him when you catch him at the Bar.
For you, our common modiſh cenſurers,
Your favour, not your judgment 'tis he fears:
Of all love begs you then to rail, find fault;
For Plays, like women, by the world are thought
(When you ſpeak kindly of 'em) very naught.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Wycherley*'s COUNTRY WIFE.

POETS, like cudgell'd bullies, never do
At firſt or ſecond blow ſubmit to you;
But will provoke you ſtill, and ne'er have done,
Till you are weary firſt with laying on:
The late ſo baffled ſcribbler of this day,
Tho' he ſtands trembling, bids me boldly ſay,
What we before moſt Plays are us'd to do,
For Poets out of fear firſt draw on you;
In a fierce Prologue the ſtill Pit defy,
And e'er you ſpeak, like Caſtril, give the lie.
But tho' our *Bayes*'s battles oft I've fought,
And with bruis'd knuckles their dear conqueſts bought;
Nay, never yet fear'd odds upon the Stage,
In Prologue dare not hector with the age;
But would take quarter from your ſaving hands,
Tho' *Bayes* within all yielding countermands,

Says, you confed'rate wits no quarter give,
Therefore his Play ſhan't aſk your leave to live.
Well, let the vain raſh fop, by huffing ſo,
Think to obtain the better terms of you;
But we, the Actors, humbly will ſubmit,
Now, and at any time, to a full Pit;
Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
And murder Poets for you on our Stage:
We ſet no guards upon our tyring-room,
But when with flying colours there you come,
We patiently, you ſee, give up to you
Our Poets, Virgins, nay, our Matrons too.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

NOW you the vigorous, who daily here
O'er vizard-maſk in publick domineer,
And what you'd do to her, if in place where;
Nay, have the confidence to cry, come out,
Yet when ſhe ſays, lead on, you are not ſtout:
But to your well-dreſs'd brother ſtrait turn round,
And cry, pox on her, Ned, ſhe can't be ſound.
Then ſlink away, a freſh one to engage,
With ſo much ſeeming heat and loving rage,
You'd frighten liſt'ning Actreſs on the Stage;
Till ſhe at laſt has ſeen you huffing come,
And talk of keeping in the tyring-room,
Yet cannot be provok'd to lead her home:
Next you Falſtaffs of fifty, who beſet
Your buckram maidenheads, which your friends get;
And whilſt to them you of atchievements boaſt,
They ſhare the booty, and laugh at your coſt.

In fine, you eſſenc'd boys, both old and young,
Who wou'd be thought ſo eager, briſk and ſtrong,
Yet do the ladies, not their huſbands wrong,
Whoſe purſes for your manhood make excuſe,
And keep your Flanders mares for ſhew, not uſe;
Encourag'd by our woman's man to day,
A *Horner*'s part may vainly think to play;
And may intrigues ſo baſhfully diſown,
That they may doubted be by few or none,
May kiſs the cards at piquet, ombre,——loo,
And ſo be taught to kiſs the lady too;
But, gallants, have a care, faith, what you do.
The world, which to no man his due will give,
You by experience know you can deceive,
And Men may ſtill believe you vigorous,
But then we Women———there's no couz'ning us.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Addiſon*'s CATO.

Written by *Alexander Pope*, Eſq;

TO wake the ſoul by tender ſtrokes of art,
To raiſe the genius, and to mend the heart,
To make mankind in conſcious virtue bold,
Live o'er each ſcene, and be what they behold:
For this the Tragic Muſe firſt trod the Stage,
Commanding tears to ſtream thro' every age;
Tyrants no more their ſavage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wonder'd how they wept.
Our Author ſhuns by vulgar ſprings to move
The Hero's glory, or the Virgin's love;

In pitying love we but our weakneſs ſhow,
And wild ambition well deſerves its woe.
Here tears ſhall flow from a more generous cauſe,
Such tears as Patriots ſhed for dying laws:
He bids your breaſts with ancient ardor riſe,
And calls forth Roman drops from Britiſh eyes.
Virtue confeſs'd in human ſhape he draws,
What Plato thought, and God-like Cato was:
No common object to your ſight diſplays,
But what with pleaſure heav'n itſelf ſurveys;
A brave man ſtruggling in the ſtorms of fate,
And greatly falling with a falling ſtate!
While Cato gives his little ſenate laws,
What boſom beats not in his Country's cauſe?
Who ſees him act, but envies every deed?
Who hears him groan, and does not wiſh to bleed?
Even when proud Cæſar 'midſt triumphal cars,
The ſpoils of Nations, and the pomp of Wars,
Ignobly vain, and impotently great,
Show'd Rome her Cato's figure drawn in ſtate,
As her dead father's reverend image paſt,
The pomp was darken'd, and the day o'ercaſt,
The triumph ceas'd——tears guſh'd from every eye,
The world's great victor paſs'd unheeded by;
Her laſt good man dejected Rome ador'd,
And honour'd Cæſar's leſs than Cato's ſword.
Britons attend: be worth like this approv'd,
And ſhew you have the virtue to be mov'd.
With honeſt ſcorn the firſt-fam'd Cato view'd
Rome learning arts from Greece, whom ſhe ſubdu'd.
Our ſcene precariouſly ſubſiſts too long
On French tranſlation, and Italian ſong:
Dare to have ſenſe yourſelves; aſſert the Stage,
Be juſtly warm'd with your own native rage.

Such Plays alone ſhould pleaſe a Britiſh ear,
As Cato's ſelf had not diſdain'd to hear.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by Dr. *Garth.*

WHAT odd fantaſtic things we women do!
Who wou'd not liſten when young lovers woo?
But die a maid, yet have the choice of two!
Ladies are often cruel to their coſt;
To give you pain, themſelves they puniſh moſt.
Vows of virginity ſhould well be weigh'd;
Too oft they're cancell'd, tho' in convents made.
Would you revenge ſuch raſh reſolves——you may:
Be ſpiteful!——and believe the thing we ſay;
We hate you when you're eaſily ſaid nay.
How needleſs, if you knew us, were your fears?
Let love have eyes, and beauty will have ears.
Our hearts are form'd as you yourſelves would chuſe,
Too proud to aſk, too humble to refuſe:
We give to merit, and to wealth we ſell;
He ſighs with moſt ſucceſs that ſettles well.
The woes of wedlock with the joys we mix;
'Tis beſt repenting in a coach and ſix.
Blame not our conduct, ſince we but purſue
Thoſe lively leſſons we have learn'd from you:
Your breaſts no more the fire of beauty warms,
But wicked wealth uſurps the power of charms;
What pains to get the gaudy thing you hate!
To ſwell in ſhow, and be a wretch in ſtate!

At plays you ogle, at the ring you bow;
Even churches are no ſanctuaries now:
There, golden idols all your vows receive,
She is no goddeſs that has nought to give.
Oh, may once more the happy age appear,
When words were artleſs, and the thoughts ſincere;
When gold and grandeur were unenvy'd things,
And courts leſs coveted than groves and ſprings.
Love then ſhall only mourn when truth complains,
And conſtancy feel tranſport in its chains;
Sighs with ſucceſs their own ſoft anguiſh tell,
And eyes ſhall utter what the lips conceal:
Virtue again to its bright ſtation climb,
And beauty fear no enemy but time;
The fair ſhall liſten to deſert alone,
And every Lucia find a Cato's ſon.

PROLOGUE

To Mr. *Addiſon*'s DRUMMER, or the HAUNTED HOUSE.

IN this grave age, when Comedies are few,
We crave your patronage for one that's New;
Tho' 'twere poor Stuff, yet bid the Author fair,
And let the Scarceneſs recommend the Ware.
Long have your ears been fill'd with tragic parts,
Blood and Blank-verſe have harden'd all your hearts;
If e'er you ſmile, 'tis at ſome party ſtrokes,
Round-heads and Wooden-ſhoes are ſtanding jokes;
The ſame conceit gives claps and hiſſes birth.
You're grown ſuch politicians in your mirth!
For once we try (tho' 'tis I own unſafe,)
To pleaſe you all, and make both parties laugh.

Our author, anxious for his fame to-night,
And baſhful in his firſt attempt to write,
Lies cautiouſly obſcure and unreveal'd,
Like ancient Actors in a maſk conceal'd.
Cenſure, when no man knows who writes the Play,
Were much good malice merely thrown away.
The mighty Critics will not blaſt, for ſhame,
A raw young thing, who dares not tell his name:
Good-natur'd judges will th' unknown defend,
And fear to blame, leſt they ſhou'd hurt a friend:
Each Wit may praiſe it, for his own dear ſake,
And hint he writ it, if the Thing ſhou'd take.
But if you're rough, and uſe him like a dog,
Depend upon it———He'll remain *incog.*
If you ſhou'd hiſs, he ſwears he'll hiſs as high,
And, like a Culprit, join the hue-and-cry.

If cruel men are ſtill averſe to ſpare
Theſe ſcenes, they fly for refuge to the fair.
Though with a Ghoſt our Comedy be heighten'd,
Ladies, upon my word, you ſhan't be frighten'd;
O, 'tis a Ghoſt that ſcorns to be uncivil,
A well-ſpread, luſty, jointure-hunting Devil;
An am'rous Ghoſt, that's faithful, fond and true,
Made up of fleſh and blood———as much as you.
Then every evening come in flocks undaunted,
We never think this Houſe is too much Haunted.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by Mrs. *Oldfield*, in the Character of *Lady Trueman*.

TO-night the Poet's advocate I ſtand,
And he deſerves the favour at my hand,
Who in my equipage their cauſe debating
Has plac'd two lovers, and a third in waiting;
If both the firſt ſhou'd from their duty ſwerve,
There's one behind the wainſcot in reſerve.
In his next Play, if I would take this trouble,
He promis'd me to make the number double:
In troth 'twas ſpoke like an obliging creature,
For tho' 'tis ſimple, yet it ſhews good-nature.
My help thus aſk'd, I cou'd not chooſe but grant it,
And really I thought the Play wou'd want it.
Void as it is of all the uſual arts
To warm your fancies, and to ſteal your hearts:
No Court-intrigue, no City-cuckoldom,
No ſong, no dance, no muſic —— but a Drum ——
No ſmutty thought in doubtful phraſe expreſt;
And, Gentlemen, if ſo, pray where's the jeſt?
When we wou'd raiſe your mirth, you hardly know
Whether in ſtrictneſs you ſhou'd laugh or no;
But turn upon the Ladies in the Pit,
And if they redden, you are ſure 'tis Wit.
Protect him then, ye Fair-ones; for the Fair
Of all conditions are his equal care.
He draws a Widow, who, of blameleſs carriage,
True to her jointure, hates a ſecond marriage;

And to improve a virtuous wife's delights,
Out of one Man contrives two wedding-nights.
Nay, to oblige the ſex in every ſtate,
A nymph of five and forty finds her mate.
Too long has marriage, in this taſteleſs age,
With ill-bred rallery ſupply'd the Stage;
No little Scribbler is of Wit ſo bare,
But has his fling at the poor wedded pair.
Our Author deals not in conceits ſo ſtale:
For ſhou'd th' examples of his Play prevail,
No man need bluſh, tho' true to marriage vows,
Nor be a jeſt tho' he ſhou'd love his ſpouſe.
Thus he has done you Britiſh conſorts right,
Whoſe huſbands, ſhou'd they pry like mine to-night,
Wou'd never find you in your conduct ſlipping,
Tho' they turn'd conjurers to take you tripping.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *Richard Steele*'s FUNERAL, or Grief A-la-mode.

NATURE deſerted, and Dramatick art,
To dazzle now the eye, has left the heart;
Gay lights and dreſſes, long extended Scenes,
Dæmons and Angels moving in Machines;
All that can now, or pleaſe, or fright the fair,
May be perform'd without a Writer's care,
And is the ſkill of Carpenter, not Player.
Old Shakeſpear's days could not thus far advance;
But what's his Buſkin to our Ladder Dance.
In the mid region a ſilk youth to ſtand,
With that unwieldly engine at command!
Gorg'd with intemperate meals while here you ſit,
Well may you take activity for wit.

Fye, let confuſion on ſuch dulneſs ſeize ;
Bluſh you're ſo pleas'd, as we that ſo we pleaſe.
But we, ſtill kind to your inverted ſenſe,
Do moſt unnatural things once more diſpenſe.
For ſince you're ſtill prepoſt'rous in delight,
Our Author made, a full Houſe to invite,
A Funeral a Comedy to-night.
Nor does he fear that you will take the hint,
And let the Funeral his own be meant ;
No, in Old England nothing can be won
Without a Faction, good or ill be done ;
To own this our frank Author does not fear ;
But hopes for a prevailing Party here :
He knows h' has num'rous friends, nay, knows they'll ſhew it,
And for the Fellow-Soldier ſave the Poet.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by Lord *Hardy*.

LOVE, Hope and Fear, Deſire, Averſion, Rage,
All that can move the ſoul, or can aſſwage,
Are drawn in miniature of life, the Stage.
Here you can view yourſelves, and here is ſhown,
To what you're borne in ſufferings not your own,
The ſtage to wiſdom's no fantaſtick way,
Athens herſelf learn'd virtue at a Play.
Our Author me to night a Soldier drew,
But faintly writ, what warmly you purſue :
To his great purpoſe, had he equal fire,
He'd not aim to pleaſe only, but inſpire ;

He'd ſing what hovering fate attends our iſle,
And from baſe pleaſure rouze to glorious toil:
Full time the earth t' a new deciſion brings,
While William gives the Roman Eagle wings:
With arts, and arms ſhall Britain tamely end,
Which naked Picts ſo bravely could defend?
The painted heroes on th' invaders preſs,
And think their wounds addition to their dreſs:
In younger years we've been with conqueſt bleſt,
And Paris has the Britiſh yoke confeſs'd;
Is't then in England, in bleſt England, known,
Her Kings are nam'd from a revolted Throne?
But we offend——You no examples need,
In imitation of yourſelves proceed;
'Tis you your Country's honour muſt ſecure,
Be all your actions worthy of Namure:
With gentle fires your gallantry improve,
Courage is brutal, if untouch'd with love:
If ſoon our utmoſt bravery's not diſplay'd,
Think that bright circle muſt be captives made;
Let thoughts of ſaving them our toils beguile,
And they reward our labours with a ſmile.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *Richard Steele*'s TENDER HUSBAND.

Written by Mr. *Addiſon*.

IN the firſt riſe and infancy of Farce,
When Fools were many, and when Plays were ſcarce,
The raw unpractis'd Authors could, with eaſe,
A young and unexperienc'd Audience pleaſe:

No ſingle character had e'er been ſhewn,
But the whole herd of fops was all their own;
Rich in originals, they ſet to view,
In ev'ry piece, a coxcomb that was new.
But now our Britiſh Theatre can boaſt
Drolls of all kinds, a vaſt unthinking hoſt!
Fruitful of Folly and of Vice it ſhows
Cuckolds, and Cits, and Bawds, and Pimps, and Beaux;
Rough Country Knights are found of every Shire,
Of ev'ry faſhion gentle Fops appear;
And Punks of different characters we meet,
As frequent on the Stage as in the Pit:
Our Modern Wits are forc'd to pick and cull,
And here and there by chance glean up a fool:
Long e'er they find the neceſſary ſpark,
They ſearch the Town and beat about the Park;
To all his moſt frequented haunts reſort,
Oft dog him to the Ring, and oft to Court,
As love of pleaſure, or of place invites:
And ſometimes catch him taking ſnuff at White's.
Howe'er! to do you right, the preſent Age,
Breeds very hopeful Monſters for the Stage;
That ſcorn the paths their dull forefathers trod,
And won't be blockheads in the common road.
Do but ſurvey this crouded Houſe to-night:
———Here's ſtill encouragemeut for thoſe that write.
Our Author to divert his friends to-day,
Stocks with variety of Fools his Play;
And that there may be ſomething gay, and new,
Two Ladies-errant has expos'd to view:
The firſt a Damſel, travel'd in romance;
The other more refin'd; ſhe comes from France.
Reſcue, like courteous knights, the nymph from danger,
And kindly treat, like well-bred men, the Stranger.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

BRITONS, who conſtant war with factious rage,
For liberty againſt each other wage,
From Foreign inſults ſave this Engliſh Stage.
No more th' Italian ſqualling tribe admit,
In tongues unknown; 'tis Popery in Wit.
The Songs (themſelves confeſs) from Rome they bring,
And 'tis High-Maſs, for ought you know, they ſing.
Huſbands take care, the danger may come nigher,
The women ſay their Eunuch is a Friar.
But is it not a ſerious ill to ſee
Europe's great arbiters ſo mean can be;
Paſſive, with an affected joy to ſit,
Suſpend their native Taſte of manly Wit;
Neglect their Comic Humour, Tragic Rage,
For known defects of Nature and of Age?
Ariſe for ſhame, ye conqu'ring Britons riſe;
Such unadorn'd effeminacy deſpiſe;
Admire (if you will dote on foreign Wit)
Not what Italians ſing, but Romans writ.
So ſhall leſs works, ſuch as to-night's ſlight Play,
At your command with juſtice die away;
'Till then forgive your Writers, that can't bear
You ſhou'd ſuch very Tramontanes appear,
The nations, which contemn you, to revere.
Let Anna's ſoil be known for all its charms;
As fam'd for lib'ral ſciences as arms:
Let thoſe deriſion meet, who would advance
Manners, or Speech, from Italy or France.
Let them learn You, who wou'd your favour find,
And Engliſh be the Language of Mankind.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *Richard Steele*'s LYING LOVER, or the LADIES FRIENDSHIP.

ALL the commanding pow'rs that awe mankind
Are in a tremb'ling Poet's audience join'd,
Where ſuch bright galaxies of beauty ſit,
And at their feet aſſembled men of wit;
Our author therefore owns his deep deſpair,
To entertain the learned or the fair;
Yet hopes that both will ſo much be his friends,
To pardon what he does, for what h' intends;
He aims to make the coming Action move
On the dread laws of Friendſhip and of Love;
Sure then he'll find but very few ſevere,
Since there's of both ſo many objects here.
He offers no groſs vices to your ſight,
Thoſe too much horror raiſe for juſt delight;
And to detain th' attentive knowing ear,
Pleaſure muſt ſtill have ſomething that's ſevere.
If then you find our Author treads the Stage
With juſt regard to a reforming age;
He hopes, he humbly hopes, you'll think there's due
Mercy to him, for Juſtice done to you.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

OUR too advent'rous Author ſoar'd to-night
Above the little praiſe, mirth to excite,
And choſe with pity to chaſtiſe delight.

For laughter's a diſtorted paſſion, born
Of ſudden ſelf-eſteem, and ſudden ſcorn;
Which when 'tis o'er, the men in pleaſure wiſe,
Both him that mov'd it, and themſelves, deſpiſe:
While generous pity of a painted woe
Make us ourſelves both more approve and know.
What is that touch within, which nature gave
For man to man, e'er fortune made a ſlave?
Sure it deſcends from that dread power alone,
Who levels thunder from his awful throne,
And ſhakes both worlds, yet hears the wretched groan.
'Tis what the ancient ſage could ne'er divine,
Wonder'd—— and call'd, part human, part divine:
'Tis that pure joy, which guardian angels know,
When timely they aſſiſt their cares below;
When they the good protect, the ill oppoſe;
'Tis what our Sovereign feels when ſhe beſtows,
Which gives her glorious cauſe ſuch high ſucceſs,
That only on the Stage you ſee diſtreſs.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *Richard Steele*'s CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

Written by Mr. *Welſted*.

TO win your hearts, and to ſecure your praiſe,
The Comic-writers ſtrive by various ways:
By ſubtle ſtratagems they act their game,
And leave untry'd no avenue to fame.
One writes the ſpouſe a beating from his wife;
And ſays, each ſtroke was copy'd from the life.

Some fix all wit and humour in grimace,
And make a livelihood of Pinkey's face:
Here, one gay ſhew and coſtly habit tries,
Confiding to the judgment of your eyes:
Another ſmuts his ſcene (a cunning ſhaver)
Sure of the rakes and of the wenches favour.
Oft' have theſe arts prevail'd; and one may gueſs,
If practis'd o'er again, would find ſucceſs.
But the bold Sage the Poet of to-night,
By new and deſp'rate rules reſolv'd to write;
Fain would he give more juſt applauſes riſe
And pleaſe by Wit that ſcorns the aids of vice:
The praiſe he ſeeks, from worthier motives ſprings,
Such praiſe, as praiſe to thoſe that give it brings.
Your aid, moſt humbly ſought, then Britons lend,
And lib'ral mirth, like lib'ral men, defend:
No more let ribaldry, with licence writ,
Uſurp the name of Eloquence, or Wit;
No more let lawleſs Farce uncenſur'd go,
The lewd dull gleanings of a Smithfield ſhow.
'Tis yours with breeding to refine the age,
To chaſten Wit, and moralize the Stage.
Ye modeſt, wiſe, and good, ye fair, ye brave,
To-night the champion of your virtues ſave,
Redeem from long contempt the Comic name,
And judge politely for your Country's fame.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Intended to be ſpoken by *Indiana*.

Written by Mr. *Welſted*.

OUR Author, whom intreaties cannot move,
Spite of the dear coquetry that you love,
Swears he'll not fruſtrate (ſo he plainly means)
By a looſe Epilogue, his decent Scenes:
Is it not, ſirs, hard fate I meet to-day,
To keep me rigid ſtill, beyond the Play?
And yet, I'm ſav'd a world of pains that way:
I now can look, I now can move at eaſe,
Nor need I torture theſe poor limbs to pleaſe;
Nor with the hand or foot attempt ſurprize,
Nor wreſt my features, nor fatigue my eyes:
Bleſs me! what freakiſh gambols have I play'd!
What motions try'd, and wanton looks betray'd!
Out of pure kindneſs all! to over-rule
The threaten'd hiſs, and ſcreen ſome ſcribbling fool.
With more reſpect I'm entertain'd to-night:
Our Author thinks, I can with eaſe delight.
My artleſs looks while modeſt graces arm,
He ſays, I need but to appear; and charm.
A wife ſo form'd by theſe examples bred,
Pours joy and gladneſs 'round the marriage bed;
Soft ſource of comfort, kind relief from care,
And 'tis her leaſt perfection to be fair.
The nymph with Indiana's worth who vies,
A nation will behold with Bevil's eyes.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh*'s RELAPSE, or Virtue in Danger.

LADIES, this Play in too much haſte was writ,
To be o'ercharg'd with either Plot or Wit;
'Twas got, conceiv'd, and born in ſix weeks ſpace,
And wit, you know, 's as ſlow in growth — as grace.
Sure it can ne'er be ripen'd to your taſte;
I doubt 'twill prove our author bred too faſt:
For mark 'em well, who with the Muſes marry,
They rarely do conceive, but they miſcarry.
'Tis the hard fate of thoſe wh'are big with rhyme,
Still to be brought to bed before their time.
Of our late Poets, nature few has made;
The greateſt part——are only ſo by trade.
Still want of ſomething brings the ſcribbling fit;
For want of Money ſome of 'em have writ,
And others do't, you ſee —— for want of Wit.
Honour, they fancy, ſummons 'em to write,
So out they lug in reſty nature's ſpight,
As ſome of you ſpruce Beaux do —— when you fight.
Yet let the ebb of Wit be ne'er ſo low,
Some glimpſe of it a man may hope to ſhow,
Upon a theme ſo ample——as a Beau.
So, howſoe'er true courage may decay,
Perhaps there's not one ſmock-face here to-day,
But's bold as Cæſar, to attack a Play.
Nay, what's yet more, with an undaunted face,
To do the thing with more heroick grace,
'Tis ſix to four y' attack the ſtrongeſt place,
You are ſuch hotſpurs in this kind of venture,
Where there's no breach, juſt there you needs muſt enter:

But be advis'd ——
E'en give the Hero and the Critic o'er,
For Nature ſent you on another ſcore;
She form'd her Beau for nothing but her Whore.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Spoken by Lord *Foppington.*

GENTLEMEN and LADIES,

THESE people have regal'd you here to-day
(In my opinion) with a ſaucy Play;
In which the Author does preſume to ſhew,
That Coxcomb, *ab origine*,——was Beau.
Truly I think the thing of ſo much weight,
That if ſome ſharp chaſtiſement ben't his fate,
Gad's curſe, it may in time deſtroy the ſtate.
I hold no one its friend, I muſt confeſs,
That wou'd diſcauntenance you men of dreſs.
Far, give me leave t'abſerve, good clothes are things
Have ever been of great ſupport to kings;
All Treaſons come from ſlovens, it is nat
Within the reach of gentle beaux to plat;
They have no gall; no ſpleen, no teeth, no ſtings,
Of all Gad's creatures, the moſt harmleſs things.
Thro' all record, no prince was ever ſlain,
By one who had a feather in his brain.
They're men of too refin'd an education,
To ſquabble with a court——for a vile dirty nation.
I'm very poſitive you never ſaw
A th'ro' republican a finiſh'd beau.

Nor truly ſhall you very often ſee
A Jacobite much better dreſs'd than he :
In ſhart, thro' all the courts that I have been in,
Your men of miſchief—ſtill are in foul linen.
Did ever one yet dance the tyburn jigg,
With a free air, or a well pawder'd wig ?
Did ever highwayman yet bid you ſtand,
With a ſweet bawdy ſnuff-bax in his hand ?
Ar do you ever find they aſk your purſe
As men of breeding do ? —— Ladies, Gad's curſe,
This Author is a dag, and 'tis not fit
You ſhou'd allow him even one grain of Wit :
To which, that his pretence may ne'er be nam'd,
My humble motion is—he may be damn'd.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh*'s ÆSOP.

GALLANTS, we never yet produc'd a Play
With greater fears than this we act to-day ;
Barren of all the graces of the Stage,
Barren of all that entertains this Age.
No Hero, no Romance, no Plot, no Show,
No Rape, no Bawdy, no Intrigue, no Beau :
There's nothing in't with which we uſe to pleaſe ye ;
With downright dull inſtruction w'are to teaſe ye :
The Stage turns Pulpit, and the world's ſo fickle,
The Play-houſe in a whim turns Conventicle.
But preaching here muſt prove a hungry trade,
The patentees will find ſo, I'm afraid :
For tho' with heavenly zeal you all abound,
As by your lives and morals may be found ;

Tho' every female here o'erflows with grace,
And chaſte Diana's written in her face;
The maids renounce the ſweets of fornication,
And one lewd wife's not left in all the nation;
Tho' men grow true, and the foul fiend defy;
Tho' tradeſmen cheat no more, nor lawyers lie;
Tho' not one ſpot be found on Levi's tribe,
Nor one ſoft courtier that will touch a bribe;
Yet in the midſt of ſuch religious days,
Sermons have never borne the price of Plays.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh*'s PROVOK'D WIFE.

SINCE 'tis th' intent and buſineſs of the Stage,
To copy out the follies of the age;
To hold to every man a faithful glaſs,
And ſhew him of what ſpecies he's an aſs:
I hope the next that teaches in the ſchool,
Will ſhew our Author he's a ſcribbling fool.
And that the ſatire may be ſure to bite,
Kind heav'n! inſpire ſome venom'd prieſt to write,
And grant ſome ugly lady may indite.
For I wou'd have him laſh'd, by heavens! I wou'd,
Till his preſumption ſwam away in blood.
Three Plays at once proclaim a face of braſs,
No matter what they are; that's not the caſe,
To write three Plays, e'en that's to be an Aſs.
But what I leaſt forgive, he knows it too,
For to his coſt he lately has known you.
Experience ſhews, to many a writer's ſmart,
You hold a court where mercy ne'er had part;

So much of the old ſerpent's ſting you have,
You love to damn, as heav'n delights to ſave,
In foreign parts, let a bold volunteer,
For public good, upon the Stage appear,
He meets ten thouſand ſmiles, to diſſipate his fear.
All tickle on the adventuring young beginner,
And only ſcourge th' incorrigible ſinner;
They touch indeed his faults, but with a hand
So gentle, that his merit ſtill may ſtand:
Kindly they buoy the follies of his pen,
That he may ſhun 'em when he writes again.
But 'tis not ſo in this good-natur'd town,
All's one, an Ox, a Poet, or a Crown;
Old England's Play was always knocking down.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by another Hand.

Spoken by LADY BRUTE and BELINDA.

Lady Brute. NO Epilogue!
Belinda. I ſwear I know of none.
Lady Brute. Lord! How ſhall we excuſe it to the town?
Belinda. Why, we muſt e'en ſay ſomething of our own.
Lady Brute. Our own! ay, that muſt needs be precious ſtuff.
Belinda. I'll lay my life, they'll like it well enough.
Come, faith, begin——— ———
Lady Brute. Excuſe me,——after you.
Belinda. Nay, pardon me for that, I know my cue.
Lady Brute. O for the world, I would not have precedence.

Belinda. O lord!
Lady Brute. I ſwear ———
Belinda. O fye!
Lady Brute. I'm all obedience.
Firſt then, know all, before our doom is fixt,
The third day is for us ———
Belinda. Nay and the ſixth.
Lady Brute. We ſpeak not from the poet now, nor is it
His cauſe——(I want a rhyme)
Belinda. That we ſollicit.
Lady Brute. Then ſure you cannot have the hearts to be ſevere,
And damn us ———
Belinda. Damn us! let 'em if they dare.
Lady Brute. Why, if they ſhould, what puniſhment remains?
Belinda. Eternal exile from behind our ſcenes.
Lady Brute. But if they're kind, that ſentence we'll recall.
We can be grateful ———
Belinda. And have wherewithal.
Lady Brute. But at grand treaties hope not to be truſted,
Before preliminaries are adjuſted.
Belinda. You know the time, and we appoint this place,
Where, if you pleaſe we'll meet and ſign the peace.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* FALSE FRIEND.

Spoken by Capt. Griffin.

YOU dread reformers of an impious age,
You awful cat-a-nine tails to the Stage,
This once be juſt, and in our cauſe engage.

To gain your favour, we your rules obey,
And treat you with a moral piece to-day;
So moral, we're afraid 'twill damn the Play.
For tho' y'ave long been leagu'd (as people tell)
T' reduce the power exorbitant of hell;
No troops you ſend, t'abate it in this field,
But leave us ſtill expos'd, to ſtarve or yield.
Your ſcouts indeed ſometimes come ſtealing in,
T' obſerve this formidable camp of ſin,
And whiſper, if we'll piouſly declare,
What aids you then will ſend to help us thro' the war.
To this we anſwer, we're a feeble ſtate,
And cannot well afford to love or hate,
So ſhou'd not meddle much in your debate.
But ſince your cauſe is good, thus far we'll go,
When Portugal declares, we'll do ſo too.
Our caſes, as we think, are much alike,
And on the ſame conditions we ſhould ſtrike;
Send to their aid a hundred men of war,
To ours a hundred ſquadrons of the fair;
Rig out your wives and daughters all around,
(I mean wh' are fit for ſervice, tight and ſound)
And for a proof our meaning is ſincere,
See but the ſhips are good, and if you fear
A want of equipage, we'll man them here.
Theſe are the terms on which you may engage
The Poet's fire, to batter from the Stage,
Uſeful ally! whoſe friendſhip lets you in
Upon the weak and naked ſide of ſin;
Againſt your old attack the foe's prepar'd,
Well fortify'd, and always on his guard;
The ſacred ſhot you ſend are flung in vain;
By impious hands, with inſolent diſdain,
They're gather'd up, and fir'd at you again.

Thro' baffled toils, and unſucceſsful cares,
In ſlaughter, blood and wounds, and pious ſnares,
Y'ave made a Flanders war theſe fifteen hundred years.
Change then your ſcheme, if you'll your foe annoy,
And the infernal Bajazet deſtroy:
Our aid accept,
W'ave gentler ſtratagems which may ſucceed;
We'll tickle 'em, where you would make 'em bleed:
In ſounds leſs harſh we'll teach 'em to obey;
In ſofter ſtrains the evil ſpirit lay,
And ſteal their immorality away.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

WHAT ſay you, Sirs, d'ye think my lady'll ſcape?
'Tis dev'liſh hard to ſtand a fav'rite rape.
Shou'd Guzman, like Don John break in upon her,
For all her virtue, heaven! have mercy on her:
Her ſtrength, I doubt, 's in his irreſolution,
There's wond'rous charms in vig'rous execution.
Indeed you men are fools, you won't believe
What dreadful things we women can forgive:
I know but one we never do paſs by,
And that you plague us with eternally;
When in your courtly fears to diſoblige,
You won't attack the town which you beſiege:
Your guns are light, and planted out of reach:
D'ye think with billet-doux to make a breach?
'Tis ſmall-ſhot all, and not a ſtone will fly:
Walls fall by cannon, and by firing nigh:
In ſluggiſh dull blockades you keep the field,
And ſtarve us ere we can with honour yield.

In ſhort ———
We can't receive thoſe terms you gently tender,
But ſtorm, and we can anſwer our ſurrender.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh*'s CONFEDERACY.

Spoken by a ſhabby Poet.

YE gods! what crime had my poor father done,
That you ſhould make a Poet of his ſon?
Or is't for ſome great ſervices of his,
Y'are pleas'd to compliment his boy———with this?
[*Shewing his crown of laurel.*
The honour, I muſt needs confeſs, is great,
If, with his crown, you'd tell him where to eat.
'Tis well——But I have more complaints—look here!
[*Shewing his ragged coat.*
Hark ye;——d'ye think this ſuit good winter wear?
In a cold morning; whu——at a lord's gate,
How you have let the porter let me wait!
You'll ſay, perhaps, you knew I'd get no harm,
You'd given me fire enough to keep me warm.
Ah ———
A world of bleſſings to that fire we owe;
Without it I'd ne'er made this princely ſhow.
I have a brother too, now in my ſight,
[*Looking behind the ſcenes.*
A buſy man amongſt us here to-night:
Your fire has made him play a thouſand pranks,
For which, no doubt, you've had his daily thanks;
He'as thank'd you, firſt, for all his decent Plays,
Where he ſo nick'd it, when he writ for praiſe.

Next for his meddling with ſome folks in black,
And bringing—Souſe—a prieſt upon his back;
For building houſes here t'oblige the peers,
And fetching all their houſe about his ears;
For a new Play, he'as now thought fit to write,
To ſooth the town—which they—will damn to-night.
Theſe benefits are ſuch, no man can doubt
But he'll go on, and ſet your fancy out,
Till for reward of all his noble deeds,
At laſt, like other ſprightly folks, he ſpeeds:
Has this great recompence fix'd on his brow
As fam'd Parnaſſus; has your leave to bow
And walk about the ſtreets—equipp'd—as I am now.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

I'VE heard wiſe men in politicks lay down
What feats by little England might be done,
Were all agreed, and all would act as one.
Ye wives an uſeful hint from this might take,
The heavy, old, deſpotick kingdom ſhake,
And make your matrimonial Monſieurs quake.
Our heads are feeble, and we're cramp'd by laws;
Our hands are weak, and not too ſtrong our cauſe:
Yet would thoſe heads and hands, ſuch as they are,
In firm confed'racy reſolve on war,
You'd find your tyrants——what I've found my dear.
What only two united can produce
You've ſeen to-night, a ſample for your uſe:
Single, we found we nothing could obtain;
We join'd our force——and we ſubdu'd our men.

Believe me (my dear ſex)-they are not brave;
Try each your man, you'll quickly find your ſlave.
I know they'll make campaigns, riſk blood and life;
But this is a more terrifying ſtrife;
They'll ſtand a ſhot, who'll tremble at a wife.
Beat then your drums, and your ſhrill trumpets ſound,
Let all your viſits of your feats reſound,
And deeds of war in cups of tea go round:
The ſtars are with you, fate is in your hand,
In twelve months time you've vanquiſh'd half the land;
Be wiſe, and keep 'em under good command.
This year will to your glory long be known,
And deathleſs ballads hand your triumphs down;
Your late atchievements ever will remain,
For tho' you cannot boaſt of many ſlain,
Your pris'ners ſhew, you've made a brave campaign.

PROLOGUE

To Sir *John Vanbrugh's* MISTAKE.

Written by Mr. *Steele.*

OUR Author's Wit and Raillery to-night
Perhaps might pleaſe, but that your Stage delight
No more is in your Minds, but Ears and Sight.
With audiences compos'd of belles and beaux,
The firſt dramatick rule is, have good clothes.
To charm the gay ſpectator's gentle breaſt,
In lace and feather tragedy's expreſs'd,
And heroes dye unpity'd, if ill-dreſs'd.
The other ſtile you full as well advance;
If 'tis a Comedy, you aſk——who dance?
For oh! what dire convulſions have of late
Torn and diſtracted each dramatic ſtate,

On this great queſtion, which houſe firſt ſhould ſell
The new French ſteps, imported by Ruel!
Deſbarques can't riſe ſo high, we muſt agree,
They've half a foot in height more wit than we.
But tho' the genius of our learned age
Thinks fit to dance and ſing, quite off the Stage,
True Action, Comic Mirth, and Tragic Rage;
Yet as your taſte now ſtands, our Author draws
Some hopes of your indulgence and applauſe.
For that great end this edifice he made,
Where humble ſwain at lady's feet is laid;
Where the pleas'd nymph her conquer'd lover ſpies,
Then to glaſs pillars turns her conſcious eyes,
And points anew each charm, for which he dies.
The muſe, before nor terrible nor great,
Enjoys by him this aweful gilded ſeat:
By him theatric angels mount more high,
And mimick thunders ſhake a broader ſky.
Then all muſt own, our Author has done more
For your delight, than ever bard before.
His thoughts are ſtill to raiſe your pleaſures fill'd;
To write, tranſlate, to blazon, or to build.
Then take him in the lump, nor nicely pry
Into ſmall faults, that 'ſcape a buſy eye;
But kindly, ſirs, conſider, he to-day
Finds you the Houſe, the Actors, and the Play:
So, tho' we Stage-mechanic rules omit,
You muſt allow it in a Whole-ſale Wit.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by Mr. *Motteux*.

I'M thinking, now good huſbands are ſo few,
To get one for my friend what I muſt do.
Camillo ventur'd hard; yet at the worſt,
She ſtole love's honey-moon, and try'd her lover firſt.
Many poor damſels, if they dar'd to tell,
Have done as much, but have not ſcap'd ſo well.
'Tis well the ſcene's in Spain; thus, in the dark,
I ſhould be loath to truſt a London ſpark.
Some accident might for a private reaſon,
Silence a female, all this acting-ſeaſon.
Hard fate of woman: any one wou'd vex,
To think what odds, you men have, of our ſex.
Reſtraint and cuſtom ſhare our inclination,
You men can try, and run o'er half the nation.
We dare not, even to avoid reproach,
When you're at White's, peep out of hackney-coach;
Nor with a friend at night, our fame regarding,
With glaſs drawn up, drive 'bout Covent-Garden.
If poor town-ladies ſteal in here, you rail,
Tho' like chaſte nuns their modeſt looks they veil;
With this decorum, they can hardly gain
To be thought virtuous, e'en in Drury-Lane.
Tho' this you'll not allow, yet ſure you may
A plot to ſhap you, in an honeſt way.
In love affairs, one ſcarce would ſpare a brother:
All cheat; and married folks may keep a pother,
But look as if they cheated one another.

You may pretend, our ſex diſſembles moſt;
But of your truth none have much cauſe to boaſt:
You promiſe bravely; but for all your ſtorming,
We find you're not ſo valiant at performing.
Then ſure Camillo's conduct you'll approve:
Wou'd you not do as much for one you love.
Wedlock's but a blind bargain at the beſt,
You venture more ſometimes, to be not half ſo bleſt.
All, ſoon or late, that dangerous venture make,
And ſome of you may make a worſe Miſtake.

PROLOGUE

To *George Granville* Lord *Lanſdowne*'s HEROIC LOVE.

Written by the Right Hon. *Henry St. John*, Eſq;

HOW hard's the Poet's taſk, in theſe our days,
Who ſuch dull palates is condemn'd to pleaſe,
As damn all ſenſe, and only fuſtian praiſe?
Charm'd with heroic nonſenſe, lofty ſtrains,
Not with the writer's, but the player's pains,
And by the Actors lungs, judge of the Poet's brains.
Let ſcribbling judges, who your pleaſures ſerve,
Live by your ſmiles, or by your anger ſtarve;
To pleaſe you in your vain fantaſtic way,
Renounce their judgment, to ſecure their pay:
By written laws, our Author would be try'd,
And write as if Athenians ſhould decide,
With Horace and the Stagyrite for guide.
Applauſe is welcome, but too dearly bought,
Should we give up one rule, thoſe mighty maſters taught.
Yet ſome, methinks, I here and there deſcry,
Who may with ancient Rome and Athens vie:
To whoſe tribunal we ſubmit with joy:

To them, and only them; for not to wrong ye
'Twould be a ſhame to pleaſe the moſt among ye.
Chiefly the ſofter ſex he hopes to move,
Thoſe tender judges of Heroic Love:
To that bright circle he reſigns his cauſe,
And if they ſmile he aſks no more applauſe.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

Written by *Bevill Higgons*, Eſq;

WHAT will the Galleries, nay Boxes ſay?
There's not one man deſtroy'd in all our Play.
Murder and blood have long poſſeſs'd the Stage,
And pleas'd the genius of a barbarous age:
But ſince the Poet's taſk's the ſoul to move,
And with his objects, make you grieve or love,
Surviving wretches ſhould more pity find
Than they who die, and leave their woes behind.
On Athens' Stage, when Greece the world gave law,
Her ſprightly dames our Agamemnon ſaw;
They ſhar'd his ſorrows, did his fate bemoan,
And always made the hero's wrongs their own.
But then the world was gay, and nature young,
Mens paſſions were more high, and fancy ſtrong;
Poets could either raiſe, or make ſo ſad,
That going home, whole audiences ran mad.
In vain we would your colder hearts inſpire,
And blow up flames, without the ſeeds of fire.
Three thouſand years ago, illuſtrious dames
Attended camps, and gave the heroes flames;

Now every wench, when batter'd and decay'd,
To Flanders fled, where ſtraight the rampant jade
At once the colonel ſerv'd, and the brigade.

If Poets have the privilege of laws
To challenge juries, who muſt try their cauſe?
To judge of Wit, the Critic be debarr'd,
Who often damns what he ne'er ſaw nor heard;
Beſides, he ſtill to Poets bears a ſpite,
For never yet was Critic who could write.

For you, the viler rabble of the Pit,
Who want good-nature tho' you have no wit,
Maliciouſly you imitate the times,
Like judges, try the Men, and not their Crimes;
With noiſe and nonſenſe whom you hate decry,
And if demanded, give no reaſon why;
But when no pity can the torrent ſtem,
Attaint the Poet whom you can't condemn.
'Tis on that ſhining circle we depend, [*To the ladies.*
For you ——
Our Poet writes,—in gratitude defend:
Of love and honour he a pattern meant,
And took the bright ideas that you lent:
Your picture drawn, ſhow then the painter grace,
Who fails in an inimitable face.

EPILOGUE

To *George Granville* Lord *Lanſdowne*'s ONCE a LOVER; AND ALWAYS a LOVER.

Spoken by ANGELICA.

I Who have been the Poet's ſpark to day,
Behold me now the champion of his Play.
Know all, who would pretend to my good grace,
I mortally diſlike a damning face.
I ſay—odzooks! 'tis good—and I'll ſtand by it:
Now let me ſee the man who dares deny it.
Who ſhall pretend to doubt my will, and pleaſure,
Him I defy- to ſend his weapon's meaſure:
I'll give him ſatisfaction——that I can——
'Sdeath, 'tis not the firſt time, I've kill'd my man.
On pain of being poſted to your ſorrow,
Fail not at four to meet me here to-morrow.

PROLOGUE

To *George Granville* Lord *Lanſdown*'s JEW of VENICE.

Written by *Bevill Higgons*, Eſq;

The Ghoſts of *Shakeſpear* and *Dryden* ariſe, crowned with Laurel.

Dryd. THIS radiant circle, reverend Shakeſpear, view,
An audience only to the buſkin due.
Shakeſp. A ſcene ſo noble ancient Greece ne'er ſaw,
Nor Pompey's dome, when Rome the world gave law.

I feel at once both wonder and delight,
By beauty warm'd tranſcendently ſo bright,
Well, Dryden, might'ſt thou ſing; well may theſe heroes fight.

Dryd. With all the outward luſtre which you find,
They want the nobler beauties of the mind,
Their ſickly judgments, what is juſt, refuſe,
And French grimace, buffoons, and mimicks chooſe;
Our ſcenes deſert, ſome wretched farce to ſee:
They know not nature, for they taſte not thee.

Shakeſp. Whoſe ſtupid ſouls thy paſſion cannot move,
Are deaf indeed to nature and to love.
When thy Ægyptian weeps, what eyes are dry!
Or who can live to ſee thy Roman die?

Dryd. Thro' perſpectives revers'd, they nature view,
Which give the paſſions images, not true.
Strephon for Strephon ſighs; and Sappho dies,
Shot to the ſoul by brighter Sappho's eyes:
No wonder then their wand'ring paſſions roam,
And feel not nature, whom th'ave overcome.
For ſhame, let genial love prevail agen,
You beaux, love ladies; and you ladies, men.

Shakeſp. Theſe crimes unknown, in our leſs poliſh'd age,
Now ſeem above correction of the Stage;
Leſs heinous faults, our juſtice does purſue;
To day we puniſh a ſtock-jobbing Jew.
A piece of juſtice, terrible and ſtrange;
Which, if purſu'd, would make a thin Exchange.
The law's defect, the juſter muſe ſupplies,
'Tis only we can make you good, or wiſe,
Whom heaven ſpares, the poet will chaſtiſe.
Theſe ſcenes in their rough native dreſs were mine;
But now, improv'd, with nobler luſtre ſhine;
The firſt rude ſketches Shakeſpear's pencil drew,
But all the ſhining maſter-ſtrokes are new.

This Play, ye critics, ſhall your fury ſtand,
Adorn'd and reſcu'd by a faultleſs hand.
Dryd. I long endeavour'd to ſupport thy ſtage,
With the faint copies of thy nobler rage,
But toil'd in vain for an ungenerous age.
They ſtarv'd me living; nay, deny'd me fame,
And ſcarce, now dead, do juſtice to my name.
Wou'd you repent? Be to my aſhes kind,*
Indulge the pledges I have left behind.

EPILOGUE

To the ſame.

EACH in his turn, the † Poet and the ‡ Prieſt,
Have view'd the Stage, but like falſe prophets gueſs'd:
The man of zeal, in his religious rage,
Would ſilence Poets, and reduce the Stage.
The Poet raſhly, to get clear, retorts
On kings the ſcandal, and beſpatters courts:
Both err; for without mincing, to be plain,
The guilt is yours of every odious ſcene.
The preſent time ſtill gives the Stage its mode,
The vices which you practiſe, we explode:
We hold the glaſs, and but reflect your ſhame,
Like Spartans, by expoſing, to reclaim.
The ſcribbler, pinch'd with hunger, writes to dine,
And to your genius muſt conform his line;
Not lewd by choice, but merely to ſubmit;
Would you encourage ſenſe, ſenſe would be writ.

* The profits of this Play were deſigned for Mr. Dryden, but upon his death were given to his ſon.
† Mr. Dryden, in his Prologue to the Pilgrim.
‡ Mr. Collier, in his View of the Stage.

Plain beauties pleas'd your ſires an age ago,
Without the varniſh, and the dawb of ſhow.
At vaſt expence we labour to our ruin,
And court your favour by our own undoing.
A war of profit mitigates the evil,
But to be tax'd and beaten, is the devil.
How was the ſcene forlorn, and how deſpis'd,
When Timon, without muſic, moraliz'd!
Shakeſpear's ſublime in vain entic'd the throng,
Without the charm of Purcell's ſyren ſong.
In the ſame antique loom theſe ſcenes were wrought,
Embelliſh'd with good morals, and juſt thought:
True nature in her nobleſt light you ſee,
Ere yet debauch'd by modern gallantry,
To trifling jeſt, and fulſome ribaldry.
What ruſt remains upon the ſhining maſs
Antiquity may privilege to paſs.
'Tis Shakeſpear's play, and if theſe ſcenes miſcarry,
Let * Gorman take the Stage——or † Lady Mary.

EPILOGUE

To Lord *Lanſdowne*'s BRITISH ENCHANTERS.

Written by the Right Hon. *Joſeph Addiſon*, Eſq;

WHEN Orpheus tun'd his pipe with pleaſing woe,
Rivers forgot to run, and winds to blow;
While liſt'ning foreſts cover'd, as he play'd,
The ſoft muſician in a moving ſhade.
That this night's ſtrains the ſame ſucceſs may find,
The force of magic is to beauty join'd:
Where ſounding ſtrings, and artful voices fail,
The charming rod, and mutter'd ſpells prevail.

* A famous prize-fighter. † A famous rope-dancer.

Let ſage Urganda wave the circling wand
On barren mountains, or a waſte of ſand,
The deſart ſmiles, the woods begin to grow,
The birds to warble, and the ſprings to flow.
The ſame dull ſights in the ſame landſkip mixt,
Scenes of ſtill life, and points for ever fixt,
A tedious pleaſure on the mind beſtow,
And pall the ſenſe with one continued ſhow:
But as our true magicians try their ſkill,
The viſion varies, tho' the place ſtands ſtill;
While the ſame ſpot its gaudy form renews,
Shifting the proſpect to a thouſand views.
Thus (without unity of place tranſgreſs'd)
Th' enchanter turns the critic to a jeſt.
But howſoe'er to pleaſe your wand'ring eyes,
Bright objects diſappear, and brighter riſe:
There's none can make amends for loſt delight,
While from that circle * we divert your ſight.

* The ladies.

FINIS.